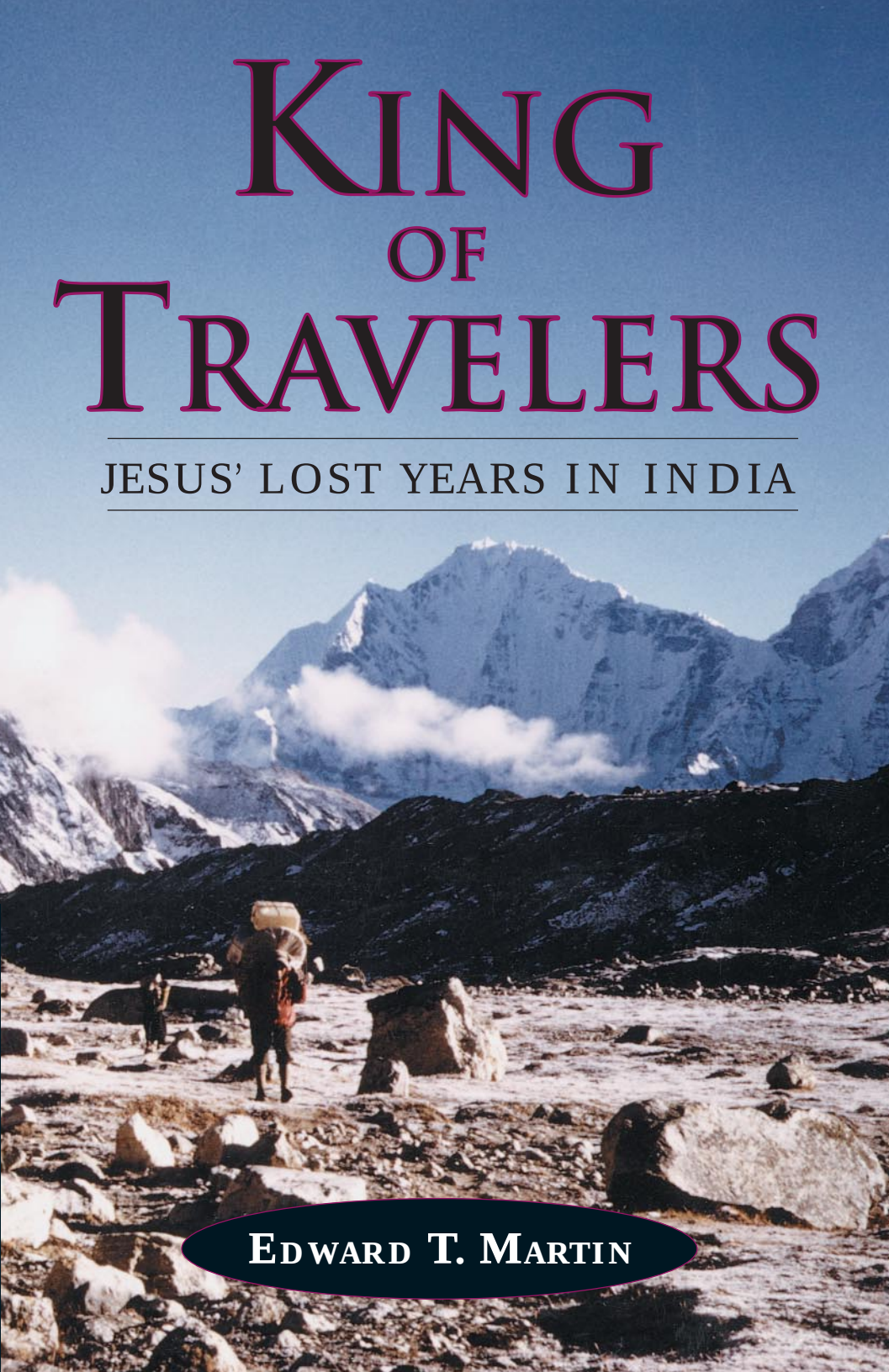
King of Travelers

JESUS' LOST YEARS IN INDIA



EDWARD T. MARTIN

King of Travelers

Jesus' Lost Years in India

BY

Edward T. Martin

Jonah Publishing Company
P.O. Box 549 • Lampasas, Texas 76550
U.S.A.

King of Travelers

Jesus' Lost Years in India

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I dedicate this book to the adventurous and open-minded explorers and researchers who pioneered the inquiry into the subject of Jesus in India.
Among those explorers:

Nicolas Notovitch,

Swami Abhedananda,

Nicholas Roerich,

Aziz Kashmiri,

Mrs. Clarence Gasque,

Madame Elisabeth Caspari,

and many more

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Thanks to Greg Ferland of Austin, Texas for his wise insights, support, and encouragement. I appreciate his help.

Lastly, my thanks to the one whose name means "the arrow of death against the untruth." And thanks also to my many friends in India, and elsewhere throughout Central Asia, without whose help this book could not have been produced.

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For the one who stayed awake with Jmmanuel
that fateful night in Gethsemane.

TJ 28:14

Foreword

H*ave you got your ticket?* These words often were used by a friend of mine, now deceased, to invite someone to a new challenge, whether it be a physical journey, an intellectual exploration, or a leap of faith.

If my friend were alive, he thoroughly would enjoy reading *King of Travelers* by Edward T. Martin. He would appreciate the rigors of walking through rugged and isolated territories; the tolerance for dealing with everyday people who are experiencing everyday problems in living, and the faith of a true Christian who seeks the truth as well as the enlightenment of Jesus the Christ.

Edward T. Martin has provided us with a ticket: a marvelous opportunity for a new journey, a new insight, and a new faith in the miraculous life of Jesus, Issa, Jmmanuel, et al.

Some persons may pick up the book but decide not to embark on the journey. They may fear the loss of a cherished image of Christ as a distant God. Or they may fear that the "gospel" (good news) is based upon the self-responsibility and self-education of many lifetimes. Or fear the connection of UFOs and spirituality.

For persons who read the book, and experience the message, there will be a profound gratitude for the author, Edward T. Martin, and for his courage and commitment to truth.

Ed is a person of many dimensions: tanned and compact, he is a fit outdoorsman; intelligent and curious, he relishes an historical mystery; generous and helpful to those around him, he seeks to renew the faith of others in the power of love as taught by Jesus.

Ed is among several writers, e.g., James W. Deardorff, Ph.D. who have analyzed the problems of the New Testament and the evidence that Jesus survived the crucifixion and continued his ministry, with family and friends, throughout Asia. The legends and the written documents are consistent, whether the source be Buddhist, Christian, Muslim or pagan writers.

A dogmatic Christian may refuse to look at the evidence, wishing to keep his or her image of Christ on the Cross, rather than the image of a living Jesus, walking and talking with the peoples of Asia and India. However, that same Christian could take pleasure (pride? or is that being un-Christian?) in noting the influence that continued in so many communities from the teachings and healings of Jesus. Which is better: A frozen image of shame and suffering? Or a living and

loving image of a traveler who continued his ministry of love and commitment to serving each and all of humanity?

You have your ticket!

So, climb aboard the pack of the writer, peek over his shoulder, and prepare yourself for visions of places and faces, climes and cultures, and the mystery of Jesus' lost years.

In my view, Ed Martin is a rugged outdoorsman; an excellent teacher and writer; and a true Christian: He seeks to live like Jesus/Issa/Jmmanuel, walking and talking, in many communities, with many people.

Ed truly enjoys other people, whether they are rich or poor, powerful or hapless, ignorant or enlightened. He shares his coin, courage, and compassion with all those who are on the same path: *The Journey of the Soul*.

Enjoy the journey!

R. Leo Sprinkle, Ph.D.

Counseling Psychologist
(and Professor Emeritus,
Counseling Services,
University of Wyoming)
Author of Soul Samples

"All great ideas begin as heresies."

— George Bernard Shaw

"All over Central Asia, in Kashmir, Ladakh and Tibet and even father North, there is still a strong belief that Jesus or Isa traveled about there."

— Jawaharlal Nehru,

Glimpses of World History

"A Traveler! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad; I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands."

—William Shakespeare,

As You Like It

"I should not talk so much about myself if there were anybody else whom I knew as well. Unfortunately, I am confined to this theme by the narrowness of my experiences."

—Henry David Thoreau,

A Week on the Concord and Merrimac Rivers

PREFACE

"And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written."

—The Gospel of John 21:25

This is an unusual book. Part of the focus of this book is about the many missing years in the life of Jesus Christ, or, as I believe, he was actually called Jmmanuel. The missing years are from the age of 12 until the year he began his ministry. I have reasons to believe that most of the missing years were spent as a student and teacher in India, Nepal, Tibet, Iran, and Egypt.

A second part of the focus of this book is about the intriguing possibility that Jesus did not die on the cross, that he was in a state of near-death, and later recovered.

And that he later returned to India, married, and lived a long life. And was buried there. At first, I completely rejected even the possibility that such a thing could have happened. Because I did not want to believe it, despite the evidence I was finding. It was more comfortable, back then, for me to cling to what I had been taught as a child, even if I sensed it was false. I later learned about a most remarkable book, *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, which sheds an entirely new light on the subject of Jesus in India.

A third focus of this book is personal narrative about my own spiritual journey. In telling this narrative, I have included a lot of personal, direct experiences which, although not precisely connected to the Jesus in India subject, may be intriguing nonetheless. Some of those stories are about my trek to Everest Base Camp, my UFO missing time experiences, Alaska grizzly bear stories, out-of-body experiences, meetings with my spirit guide, climbing a few high mountains, Yeti stories, travel stories from Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal, and more! This is heady stuff, yes! And wild! Not many people are crazy enough, or unconventional enough, to seek out the same experiences and knowledge which I have. I have gone through many hardships willingly.

A fourth focus of this book is about materials in connection with a unique UFO contactee case in Switzerland: that of Eduard Albert 'Billy' Meier. Since seeing his first UFO at the age of five years, while with his father, Meier has had a long involvement with human extraterrestrial visitors from the Pleiades. Meier's formal education was intentionally limited to avoid having to un-learn much of our flawed mainstream public education. Rather, Meier traveled, worked, and lived, throughout much of Africa and Asia,

including India. To me, that is the best possible real education. Mr. Meier was a co-discoverer of *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* documents. For the complete and accurate information about Mr. Meier, please see the Resources section at the end of this book and contact his organization directly.

Let's return for now to the subject of the many 'lost' years in the life of young Jesus. Why is it that our vast Western Civilization, which is overwhelmingly Christian, expresses so little curiosity about those missing 18 years? Obviously, Jesus lived through those years; he was somewhere. But where was he and what was he doing? Why do our traditional New Testament Gospels hide those years from us? What is being covered up and why?

Was Jesus just fiddling around in his father's carpentry shop, happily humming away, making tables and chairs? Why did he waste so much time, piddling around, one might ask? What was he waiting for? Why didn't he start his ministry much sooner?

For that matter, there is no real evidence at all that Jesus became a carpenter. There is only an assumption of that, because in those days sons often took the same profession as their fathers. But, not always.

Many people overlook a very important historical point: Jewish boys and girls of that time were normally expected to get married at the age of 12 or 13 years. That was a powerful social and cultural part of expected, proper behavior. The expectation was even stronger for a very intelligent, good-looking, healthy boy from a decent family.

Concerning the physical appearance of Jesus, Elsie Sechrist, an author who wrote extensively about Edgar

Cayce, quoted a historical eyewitness of Jesus. The alleged witness was a Roman centurion named Longinus, who wrote: "He is a handsome and dignified man of above average height. His hair is long, touching his shoulders, and both his hair and beard are the color of new wine, reddish. He does not speak often; but, when he does speak, his words are clear and of great quality. He enjoys humor and is known to laugh often."

In that context, young sexy Jesus would have been a real 'catch.' Certainly, the fathers of eligible, attractive girls would be approaching Joseph and Mary to discuss the situation: "Which girl will Jesus marry and how soon? When will you decide?" Certainly, the pressure would be building. For a boy intending to become a rabbi, a spiritual teacher, the expectation of marriage, if anything, would be even stronger.

In that context, any boy who stubbornly refused marriage would be considered perhaps immoral (he wants to have sex with lots of girls), indecent, crazy, physically unable, or just weird. It certainly would have put a burden and disadvantage upon any such boy.

But, when Jesus began his ministry and was apparently single, he had no such disadvantage of public opinion. What could explain that? Perhaps the most plausible explanation is that he was physically absent for many years. One acceptable reason for not marrying was that of traveling extensively, for example, for the purpose of studying in foreign lands. One could hardly expect such a person to put a spouse through the many hardships of long travels. Such a person could be expected to marry later.

Let us not forget also, that Jesus had brothers and sisters! The Gospels speak about those siblings in

Matthew 13: 55,56. If Jesus decided to secretly leave home at, let's say, the age of 13, he could have written a farewell letter to his parents, explaining that he was going away to study and would return after some years. Then, he could slip away at night, walk some distance, and join a camel caravan going eastward to India.

In those times, a strong boy of 13 would be considered a man, and a caravan leader could always use a helpful, trustworthy young man. Mary and Joseph would be upset, yes, but they had other sons and daughters to think about, and life simply must go on. The parents knew that their son had a lot of maturity and good judgment for his years, and besides, they would see him in the future. Recently, I heard a lady minister at a Unity Church say jokingly that she wished her son had gone away at 13 and reappeared later. Life would have been much easier, she said.

In seriousness, though, another possibility is that young Jesus may have had a sponsor, a wealthy patron. Levi Dowling, a Union Army Civil War Chaplain, put that possibility forward in his beautiful book, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. In that book, a Prince Ravanna from the eastern India state of Orissa was visiting Jerusalem and became the sponsor of Jesus.

Considering the long history of the written word and record-keeping in India, Pakistan, Nepal, and Tibet, it is possible that more written details of the youth and later life of Jesus may be uncovered in the future. More surprises may lie ahead.

"Where there is smoke, there is fire" and there is a tremendous amount of smoke regarding the subject of Jesus in India! Not only may there be undiscovered ancient historical documents, but the recent advances in

DNA testing and forensic medicine may open up unimagined possibilities for exploring the truth.

One additional reason I have written this book is because I want to make myself available to help and encourage people in their spiritual search. I want to help people of all ages, but especially young adults, people who are beginning their search. One analogy I have heard is that of the word "triage."

The triage concept was developed by French battlefield surgeons, that is, of all those wounded, about one-third would die anyway, another third were slightly hurt and would live anyway. The middle third of the triage were between life and death and could go either way. That group was where the major attention was placed. I'm certainly not a surgeon, but what I mean by this analogy is that many people are between light and darkness in their spiritual search, and could go either way. Perhaps I can encourage some people in their search for the truth.

As the statement is made in the X-Files: "The truth is out there." The TRUTH, the queen of all our dreams. Glistening, pouring in like beams of bright sunlight into a forest of darkness. May the truth vanquish the darkness. Personally, I think that finding the truth about the subject of Jesus in India, about Jmmanuel, will transform our thinking and way of life, changing us all for the better. I hope you enjoy my search as much as I have.

Sincerely,

Edward T. Martin
Lampasas, Texas
June, 1999

Introductory Note

Of incidental note to the reader is the following e-mail from Dr. James W. Deardorff:

> The missing 18 years—from age 12 until 30. Open *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* to verse 2:1, and you read that Jmmanuel was born during the time of Herod Antipas. This was not King Herod, but one of his sons. If you research it, you find that Antipas received the dynastic title of Herod in 6 A.D.
>
> Then read in *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* 1:97 that this occurred soon after the decree of Caesar Augustus went out (as is also in the Gospel of Luke). This decree has been recognized by at least one scholar (historian Peter Wiseman) to have been the decree issued in 6 A.D. to take an enrollment of all Roman citizens in preparation for an inheritance tax to be imposed. Then in *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* 1:98 one reads that this also occurred in the time that Cyrenius was prefect in Syria, which at that time included Judea and Bethlehem. Cyrenius is known to have acquired this post in 6 A.D. (Luke has this also).

So why do most scholars and the church think that Jesus was born a year or so before 4 B.C.? Because in Matthew it says the birth took place during the reign of King Herod, shortly (maybe a year or so) before his death, which is known to have been in 4 B.C.

So the Gospels are in conflict over this, but in *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* all facts coincide that Jesus' birth was in 6 A.D. With hindsight one can easily see that the writer of Matthew falsified it (simply by changing Antipas to King), partly in order that he could add a quote (see Mt 2:20) that is patterned after Exodus 4:19 and so compared Jesus favorably to Moses; and partly in order that he could heap abuse upon the hated King Herod by inventing the story about the massacre of the firstborn sons (Mt 2:16).

The reason the church settled for Matthew being right and Luke wrong here is likely because Jesus would be a good ten years more mature during his Palestinian ministry if they went with the earlier birthdate of 4–6 B.C.

This is all in my book *The Problems of New Testament Gospel Origins* (Mellen Press, 1992), pp. 115-117, and in *Celestial Teachings*.

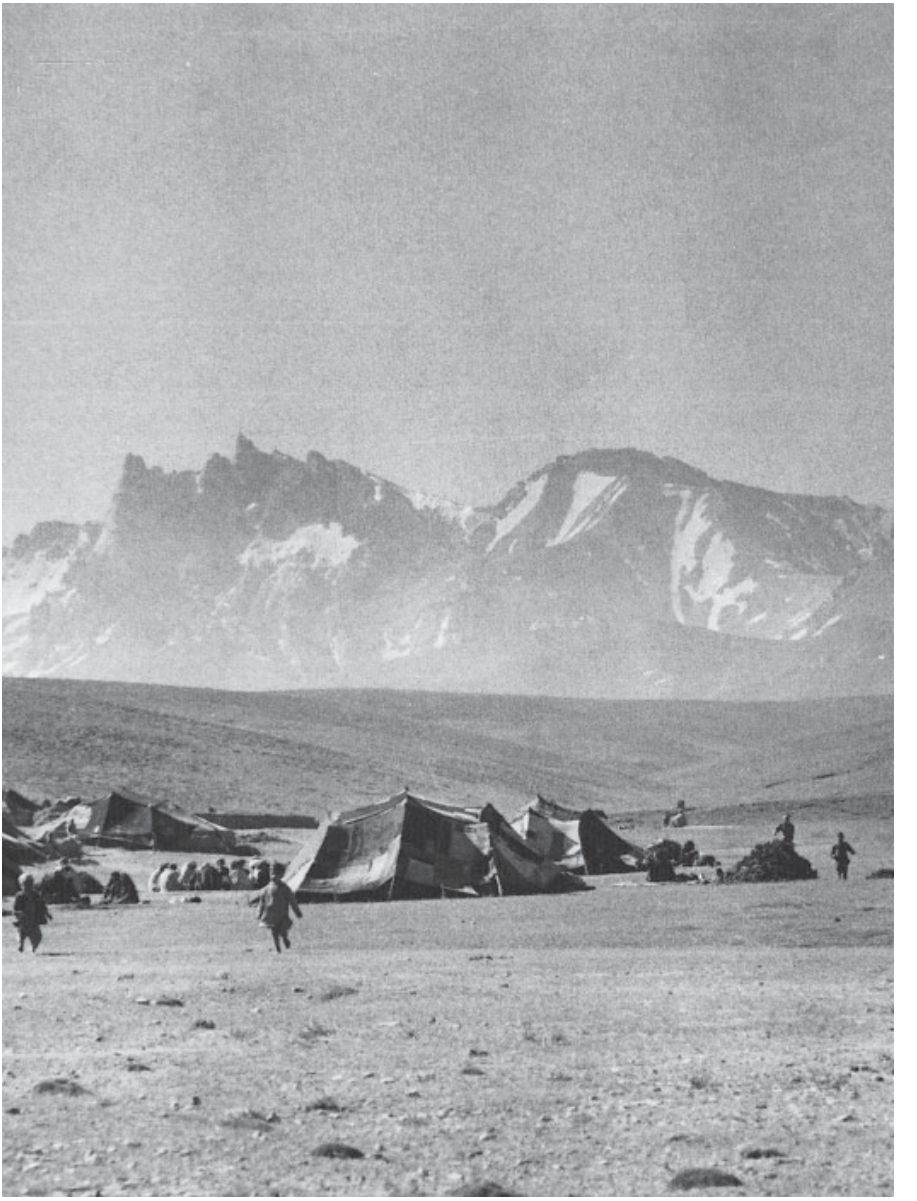
So if Jmmanuel was born in 6 A.D. (and left for India in 18 A.D.), he would have been 26 years old at the time of the crucifixion in 32 A.D., and so maybe only 23 or 24 years old upon returning from his "lost" years in India.

King of Travelers

Jesus' Lost Years in India

"We are going again, this time to Central Asia, where, if anywhere upon earth, wisdom is to be found, and we anticipate that our journey will be a long one."

— H. Rider Hagard, *She*



Chapter 1

A Very Strange Bottle of Beer:
A Connection with Jesus in India

Whenever a human being sets out to find the real truth about something, he must first arm himself with great courage. Because he may not find what he is expecting.

—Jiddu Khrishnamurti

With a roar, the Ariana Afghan Airlines jet burst downwards through the dense cloud cover and began the descent toward Kabul, Afghanistan. The jagged, snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, the "Hindu Killer" mountains, the western extension of the Himalayas, sprawled below us. A strange-looking array of mud buildings, turbaned men with rifles slung on

their shoulders, and a caravan of two-humped, Bactrian camels loomed below us. I looked around at my friends as we all stared out the windows of the aircraft. We all had an eerie feeling. It was as if we were about to arrive on a strange, alien planet. In a sense, we were.

I was a young Peace Corps volunteer about to be stationed in the central Asian country of Afghanistan. After three months of Persian language and cross-cultural training, our group of about 35 Americans would be sworn in as volunteers and given work assignments. I had volunteered for the Peace Corps because I wanted to do some form of national service for my country, the United States of America. In World War Two, my father, Thomas F. Martin, had gallantly volunteered to serve in the Army Air Force. He died suddenly from a heart attack when I was 19.

Another reason I was in the Peace Corps was because I had the strong desire to visit India. Yes, I had grown up in a small town in Texas. Every summer we had gone on family vacation trips to different parts of the United States. By the time I finished high school I had seen many parts of the U.S.A. But India? I can't explain it, but since I was a child, I had wanted to go to India. I was keenly interested in spirituality and other religions, such as Hinduism and Buddhism. I wanted to explore things firsthand.

A third reason for being in the Peace Corps was pure red-blooded, rip-snorting, hell-raising adventure! I wanted to see the world! Especially the Third World, the developing countries of Africa, Asia, and South America. I wanted to have my own firsthand, direct knowledge of the world. I wanted to check things out personally, and see if the things I had been taught were

Street scene, Kabul, Afghanistan (note woman on right wearing a full veil).

really true. I wanted to think independently, outside of the box, and to draw my own conclusions. And I wanted the fun and thrill and adventure of traveling to exotic lands and experiencing the diversity, beauty, and wonders of this planet.

Part of that firsthand knowledge also, would be my own enquiry about human nature. For example: why do human beings on planet Earth love to fight so much? I'm not talking about self-defense, which is necessary and good. I'm talking about excessively hot-tempered, over-aggressive, war-loving behavior. Somehow, to me, something seemed out-of-whack, just wrong. Are humans supposed to be like that? I wondered if human beings in other star systems could be as war-crazy as we are?

Sawdust used as winter heating fuel.

Another thing I had puzzled about is how rapidly humans get old. I had even at times seen high school students with grey hairs. Or people in their 20's or 30's beginning to look like old people. Why did the Old Testament in the Bible tell of people routinely living hundreds of years? Later, I found a possible explanation for both puzzles: the possibility of a very ancient genetic manipulation. More on this later.

So in Afghanistan, our group of about 35 volunteers were taken first to a dormitory-type building in the Shari-Nau (New City) section of Kabul. It was December that year, and the weather was cold and icy, with occasional snowfalls. Our rooms were heated with stoves which burned sawdust as fuel.

We studied Farsi (Persian) language from a group of Afghan teachers. They also taught us about the culture and customs of Afghanistan, and how to get along. In our free time, we walked in the bazaars, went

exploring by bicycle or taxi, or drank tea and smoked water pipes. I used to love to go to a laid-back, hippie-type restaurant on "Chicken Street," near the Green Hotel, where a man from India was always playing beautiful music with his sitar.

The Road to India

The paved road from Istanbul, in western Turkey, continues eastward through Tehran, Iran, through Afghanistan and Pakistan, all the way to New Delhi, India, and beyond. United Nations Highway One is the modern designation for the road. The route itself is one of the most ancient and famous trade routes in the world: the legendary "Overland to India" route.

Also called "The Silk Road" because of the ancient trade in silk which went from China all the way to Rome. Marco Polo had traveled the Silk Road through Afghanistan, in 1272, with his father and uncle. They passed through the spectacular province of Badakhshan—high, forested country, famous for its deep-blue lapis lazuli stones. Then they went through the Wakhan corridor of the Pamirs, the "Roof of the World." The Pamir Mountains are the home of the "Ovis Poli," the huge, wild "Marco Polo" sheep, which look like a gigantic version of Alaskan Dall Sheep. Finally, they climbed through the Wakhjir Pass, and continued eastward to China.

Now, there were always many young travelers with backpacks, especially from Europe, making the journey from Europe to India, London to Kathmandu, or some variation thereof. Thousands of them passed through Afghanistan every year, by bus, car, motorcycle, or even

bicycle! I enjoyed talking with them and envied their freedom and sense of adventure.

After a couple of weeks in Kabul, we were sent eastward to continue our three months of training at a town in the desert called Jalalabad. It was pretty grim. On my first day there, I was sent to take a message concerning vaccinations to a doctor at a hospital. For a hospital, the place was incredibly dusty and filthy, with flies buzzing everywhere. People directed me to the doctor, I knocked on the door, and he told me to enter.

I was astounded when I opened the door and found two very bloody, dead Afghan men lying on the tile floor. It looked like they had both been shot in the face at close range with a shotgun. The Afghan doctor examining them looked up with a big grin and said, "They were stupid! They stopped in the desert to pick up a hitchhiker and he killed them both and stole their truck!" He then threw his head back and laughed hilariously! I quickly handed him the paper with the message, turned, and left. I was close to vomiting.

A couple of days after that, some of us watched an Afghan man kill his camel with a sword in a fit of rage. He then gutted it, butchered it, and sold the meat on the spot. He had plenty of buyers. We also watched people whipping emaciated horses and once saw a group of children stone a stray dog to death. Muslims, generally speaking, hate dogs and consider that dogs breathe out filth with their breath. The Prophet Mohammed, in his escape from Medina, was betrayed by the barking of dogs.

Well, our training in Jalalabad went okay. The Afghan women, by the way, almost all wore the socklike, complete body covering called the "chador," or,

"shadri." It was like each woman was wearing a tent-like contraption which was a full-body veil. It was annoying, at least, to not be able to look at the women.

About women: once we accidentally threw a frisbee over a high mud fence. One male trainee climbed up

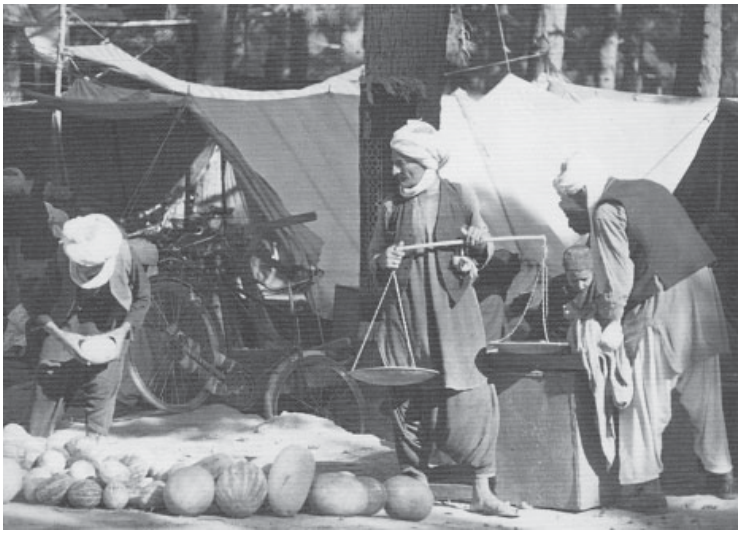
Downtown scene near Public Garden Bridge, Kabul, Afghanistan.

and looked over into a yard where several women ran into a house. A minute or two later, a very mean-looking Afghan man brandishing a bolt action rifle came striding into our compound. He was bearded, wearing a turban and robes, with a bandolier of rifle cartridges and a very long knife on his belt. He spoke angrily in Farsi, shook his fist in the air repeatedly, and left. One of our male Afghan teachers translated that he said if anyone sticks their head over the fence again, he will kill them. We didn't play frisbee any more.

Becoming a Peace Corps Volunteer

After the training, we were sworn in as full-fledged Peace Corps Volunteers. I was sent to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) to the Afghan government employees at a place called Central Statistics Office in the Karte Char section of Kabul. The work was okay.

Local bus, Jalalabad, Afghanistan.



Watermelon bazaar, Herat, Afghanistan. Marco Polo wrote that Afghanistan has the best melons in the world.

My students were pleasant, educated adults and the classes included both men and women.

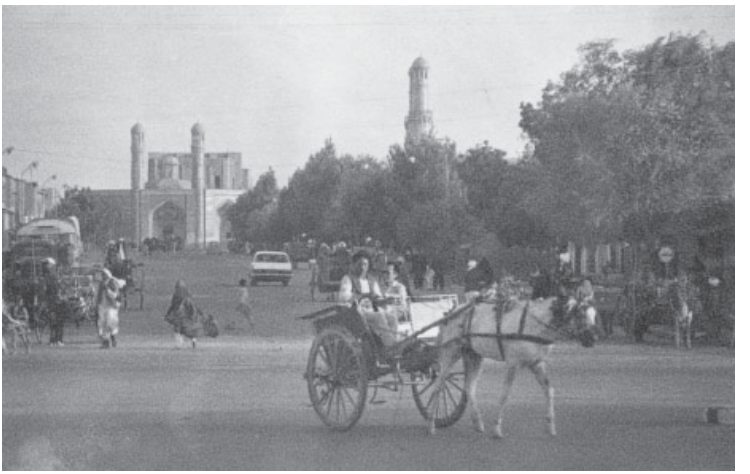
But being a foreigner in Afghanistan was very difficult. Especially for a young person from a Western country, it was exasperating! Afghanistan is a rigidly strict Muslim country with a repressive, police-state type of government. There are no bars, no night clubs, no dancing, no alcohol, and so forth. At that time, there was not any television in the country, either. Or videos. And all women are brutally oppressed.

Many of the Afghan people simply hate foreigners! Historically, foreigners have invaded Afghanistan, plundered, and just brought trouble. So many Afghans don't even try to conceal their contempt. One favorite trick is for an Afghan to "accidentally" spit on the pants or dress of a foreigner. The leering smile and phony apology only

make it worse. And if you really protest, you stand a good chance of having an icepick-shaped knife plunged into your chest by an irate Afghan male.

And incidentally, the word "xenophobia," meaning fear or hatred of strangers or foreigners is believed by some people to come from the name of one of Alexander the Great's generals, named Xenophon. Alexander and his army passed through Afghanistan in about 300 B.C. en route to India. And incidentally, also, in the vicinity of the Khyber Pass, Alexander and his army were harassed by two flying, "silvery shields" which swooped at them repeatedly. Ancient UFOs?

Also, in Afghanistan there is more than a 90% illiteracy rate, so there are a lot of uneducated, even stupid people running around. The poverty in Afghanistan is grindingly oppressive. There is no petroleum-based wealth in Afghanistan. There is a tremendous amount of public filth, open sewers, and the like. Many Afghan



Street scene, Herat, Afghanistan

people also have strong body odors because of not enough bathing and clothes washing.

One of the few places where a young American could go to relax and forget about being in Afghanistan, was at the American Embassy Annex. Within the Annex was a spacious bar, equipped with foreign liquors. The bartender was a Pakistani Christian known simply as Mr. Wilson. Pakistani Christians are generally obligated to take Western names. And being a Christian, it was okay for him to handle alcoholic beverages.

Edgar Cayce and the Subject of Jesus in India

I had volunteered for the Peace Corps in the first place because I was hoping to get a work assignment in India. I embarked on my own journey of spiritual unfolding when at the age of eighteen I met a young man from Hopkinsville, Kentucky who told me about Edgar Cayce. Cayce is America's best known and best respected psychic and prophet. He was from Hopkinsville, Kentucky.

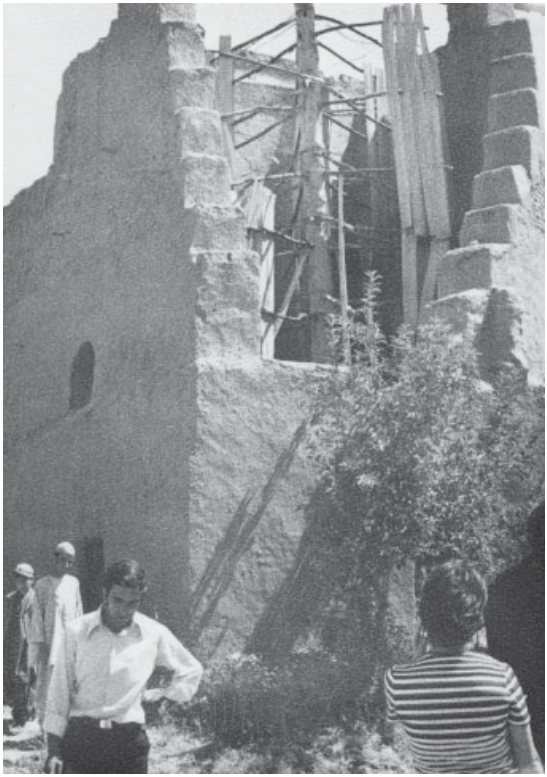
Among the thousands of life readings and medical readings which Cayce gave, there were numerous times when Cayce stated that Jesus had indeed lived in India. For example, in one trance, Cayce said: "Jesus' studies in India, Persia, and Egypt covered much greater periods...." Furthermore, the readings said that Jesus had lived many years in India and had studied and learned from great teachers there. I wanted to investigate this!

A second source of information, *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* by Levi Dowling, a Civil War chaplain

in the Union Army, gives a beautiful narrative account of the life and teachings of Jesus in India, Tibet, and elsewhere. Dowling obtained the material by frequently going into meditation and contacting the Akashic Records, which is a recording of all the words, thoughts, and deeds of all the people who have ever lived on earth. Cayce frequently used the Akashic Records also and affirmed that they are very real! So regarding Jesus in India, I was inclined to accept the idea, if for no other reason, simply because of the high regard I have for the Edgar Cayce readings. After all, didn't it seem really strange about the mysterious, missing years in the life of Jesus between the ages of 12 and when he began his ministry? Why is there only one transitional verse between those two ages? That verse is in the second chapter of Luke, and it states: "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." And that describes many years of living?!? And, Jesus of Nazareth is easily the most important historical figure in world history! And we meekly accept that missing time without any question???

Doesn't it seem transparently obvious that something significant is being intentionally omitted? And if so, what could the hot potato be? And what heresies are within the truth which has been concealed from us??? The conventional explanation is that following the incident at the age of 12, at the feast of the Passover, when Jesus disappeared from Mary and his surrogate father Joseph, he was found in a very scholarly discussion with Rabbi Hillel and the other High Priests. Later, we are supposed to believe he worked with Joseph in the carpentry shop until his ministry.

Then He began His ministry and was crucified at the age of 33. Perhaps as is shown in the movie *Ben Hur*,



Ancient vertical windmill,
Herat, Afghanistan.

Jesus would frequently skip off from his carpentry work and go for long, moody walks in the hills where somehow, magically, great spiritual knowledge would keep coming to him. Despite my infinite respect and profound regard for Jesus, I think that explanation is downright dopey!

It makes much more sense to me that a person so intensely and deeply dedicated to spiritual growth as Jesus was, would travel and actively seek out great

spiritual teachers who would have the wisdom, training, and books he would need. I was told that the great traveler and Muslim scholar Ibn Batutta referred to Jesus as the "King of Travelers." The *Holy Koran* of the Muslims calls Jesus the "Chief of Travelers." Wouldn't that indicate that Jesus must have traveled extensively outside of the Middle East? And Muslim scholars had various historical sources of knowledge about those travels.

Only a few days before my departure for Afghanistan, an amazing incident happened. I strongly believe now that it was an act of divine order, or as Bill Moyers would put it: "being helped by hidden hands." I was staying at my mother's house in our hometown of Lampasas, Texas. One afternoon my mother returned to the house in a state of excitement and told me that she had just seen a high school classmate of hers whom she had not seen in many years. This man had become a career diplomat in the U.S. State Department, and, as it turned out, had spent much of his career in India!

Hearing about Kashmir, India

My mother was at a fabric shop in downtown Lampasas that day, buying thread for her dry cleaning business, when she saw her old friend and his wife. At first, she walked out of the store, uncertain if the man was really whom she thought. But then somehow, she rallied her courage and walked back into the store and spoke to the man. It was her classmate after all!

He introduced his wife and after a few minutes of reminiscing, my mother happened to mention that her younger son would be leaving in a few days to go to

Afghanistan, to serve as a Peace Corps volunteer. She explained that my reason for going to that part of the world was because I had the very keen desire to visit India and to see many parts of India firsthand. Her friend's eyes became big and he enthusiastically explained that he had spent much of his life living and working in India. "I must speak with your son!" he exclaimed.

As soon as my mother and I had finished speaking, there came a knock at the door and in stepped my mother's friend. He smiled and we shook hands and invited him to sit with us in the breezeway. While my mother went to the kitchen to bring drinks, her friend discussed India in some detail. Before long, he came to an important point. "You must visit Kashmir while you

Caretaker with doves at the Tomb of Ali in Mazar-i-Sharif, Afghanistan

are in India!" he insisted. "There is no other place like it," he explained, "on the whole planet it is unique. The vale of Kashmir is like heaven on earth."

My mother's friend soon had to leave, but I thought a long time about what he had said. Inwardly, something had changed. Before, I had thought only marginally about Kashmir. It was on a far, back burner. Probably, I would not have gone there. But thanks to my mother's friend, I had made a decision: I would go to Kashmir, God willing. I am very glad I did. I would never have expected what I found there!

Murree Beer

So to return to my Peace Corps experience in Afghanistan: one afternoon after work, I was at the bar within the American embassy annex. As I walked to the bar and approached the Pakistani bartender, Mr. Wilson, I had no idea that something significant was about to take place in my life. I looked behind Mr. Wilson at the display bottles sitting on the shelves. One bottle of beer in particular caught my attention. The label said "Murree Beer," a brand brewed in neighboring Pakistan.

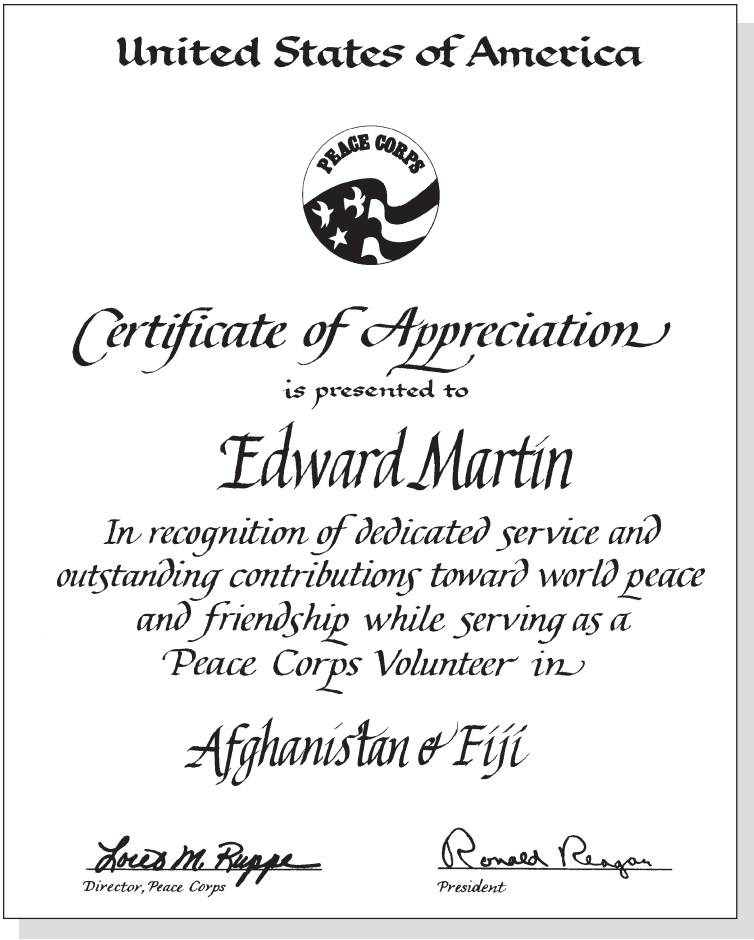
I asked to see a bottle. As I examined the label, I asked Mr. Wilson, a Pakistani Christian, where the name Murree came from.

"Murree is a town in northern Pakistan in the Himalayan foothills, sahib," replied Mr. Wilson.

"Is Murree named after an Englishman?" I asked.

"Oh, no, sahib," he responded, "Murree comes from the name Mary."

"Was Mary a woman from England?"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In recognition of dedicated service and outstanding contributions toward world peace and friendship while serving as a Peace Corps Volunteer in

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"Oh, no, sahib. Mary was the mother of Jesus," he said.

I felt puzzled. I took a long sip of beer. "But Pakistan is mostly a Muslim country. Why would a town have a Christian name?" I asked.

"Because Mary is buried there; her tomb is in that place. The town grew up around it and is named for

Mary," he said.

My mind was boggled for a long moment. I took a longer sip of beer. "Let me see if I understand you correctly," I said. "You are saying that Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, is buried at a place in northern Pakistan. Is that correct?" I asked.

"Most assuredly, sahib. I have been there numerous times myself and visited the holy tomb. It is considered a sacred place by both Christians and Muslims alike."

"But why would Mary, the mother of Jesus, be buried in northern Pakistan? What would she possibly be doing there?" I asked.

Mr. Wilson shrugged his shoulders and took a deep breath as he dried a glass with a towel. "Some people believe that Jesus survived the crucifixion; that he was in a state of near-death. They believe that he later returned to India and was accompanied by his mother and other people. Mary became sick and died during the journey." Mr. Wilson turned to take care of another customer and I shifted my thoughts inward and reflected on our discussion.

It was years later when I was reading *Jesus in India* by Dr. James W. Deardorff that I found a passage on page 245 concerning the existence of a Yuz Asaf sect near Herat, Afghanistan. Yuz Asaf is the name used by Jesus / Jmmanuel after the crucifixion and means "leader of the healed" (or cleansed). Specifically, the name may refer to those who were healed of leprosy. This sect knew of Yuz Asaf having survived the crucifixion and traveling past their area at or near Herat and on to the Kashmir area. They also knew of his time spent as a youth in India. This is completely independent evidence from any which the Muslims or

Ahmadiyyas (a Kashmiri sect) have recorded, and so is quite valuable.

Independent Evidence from Herat, Afghanistan

The passage states: "In northwestern Afghanistan there are some 1,000 devotees of Isa, son of Maryam, living within several scattered villages and centered at Herat. They revere him as having been Yuz Asaf, their ancient teacher. Their traditions are surprisingly similar to what is reported herein: Isa escaped the cross, was helped to flee to India, where he had been before in his youth, and later settled in Kashmir where he lived for over thirty years past the time of the crucifixion. He was (again) regarded as possessing the power to perform miracles. These believers in Isa are not Ahmadiyyas, however, as they possess their own traditions on this that date back through the centuries."

The passage continues: "Their present leader, Abba Yahiyya (Father John) can recite the names of the succession of their other leaders or teachers through nearly 60 generations back to Yuz Asaf himself, according to O.M. Burke, who personally interviewed Father John while researching Sufism in this area of the globe (Omar Michael Burke, *Among the Dervishes*, London: Octagon Press, 1976, p. 107). If one assigns 32 years per generation, this number of generations indeed takes one back to the end of the first century. Burke referred to the sect as Christians, as they do regard Isa as the Son of God; however, they cannot be considered Christians in any orthodox sense. They do not trust the New Testament gospels, for example, as their own traditions were

learned from Isa or Yuz Asaf during years following the crucifixion, according to their leader."

The passage concludes: "In eastern Afghanistan near the towns of Ghazni and Jalalabad, respectively, there are two platforms that bear the name of Yuz Asaf, where he is said to have sat and preached (K.N. Ahmad, *Heaven on Earth,* 360; Kersten, *Jesus Lived in India*, 184). Unfortunately, K.N. Ahmad did not spell out the location of the platform within either of these two cities, nor in this instance refer to his sources.

Returning to my Peace Corps experience: I thanked Mr. Wilson for our good discussion, finished my beer, and left him a good tip. Then I walked to the far side of the mostly vacant room and found a dimly lit area with cushions beside a wall where I could lie down for a while.

Waiting for His Divine Cue

Wow, I thought, that was a very strange bottle of beer! How do you like your Jesus? I thought. Well, I thought then, I like my Jesus stone-cold dead. Dead as a doornail! That is, after he's been crucified. Then he gets to magically come back to life for a little while—the Resurrection! Of course, it's kind of peculiar that he still needs to eat food, like when he visited the fishermen beside the lake and said he was hungry and ate some fish. I wonder if he still did bowel movements after the Resurrection? And if so, would that be holy excrement?

So after he's appeared to enough folks, and given the Great Commission to preach the Gospel everywhere, he miraculously ascends into the air (or was that added later?) and sits at the right hand of God

Almighty. And supposedly, he's still sitting there now, biding his time, waiting for his divine cue, to go into action at the Second Coming.

Certainly, I did not want Jesus to be in a state of near-death and then with the help of healers, medicines, and salves to survive! And certainly, like any good Christian, I didn't want him to become healthy again! And, God forbid, I wouldn't want him later to run off to India. And be palsy-walsy with his Hindu and Buddhist friends! Maybe drinking wine together! And later getting to die, like any normal human being! And being buried in the ground! Who did he think he was? Didn't he know we had put him on a very, very high pedestal? And raised him to God status? More on this in Chapter 5: How Do You Like Your Jesus?

Yes, I was raised as a fundamentalist, protestant Christian, and even though as a teenager I had begun to believe in reincarnation, I was still clinging tightly to the basic package of what I had been taught. I immediately put up a mental shield when I was confronted with something that disputed what was comfortable.

But that tomb of Mary! How wildly improbable! Who could have dreamed up such an absurd location! And the story that went with it! How bizarre can you get??? But what was the explanation for Mary's tomb being in Pakistan??? I didn't realize it at the time, but as I prepared to go from Afghanistan on vacation to India, more pieces of the puzzle were about to fall into place.

Chapter 2

Journey to the Vale of Kashmir: Heaven on Earth

Go confidently in the direction of your dreams; live the life you have imagined.

—Henry David Thoreau

On a crisp, sunny morning in the beginning of October, I put on my Kelty pack, said farewell to my housemate, and walked out onto Chicken Street in Kabul, Afghanistan. I soon hailed a taxi, negotiated a price, and was on my way to the Silver Bullet, the well-known direct bus from Kabul to Peshawar, Pakistan. Our route lay through the fabled Khyber Pass, the most famous of the more than 300 passes through the Hindu Kush, the "Hindu Killer" mountains which separated ancient India from Afghanistan.

The Silver Bullet didn't actually travel at great speed, but it was silver-colored, and the name was catchy. I was already having an immensely good time, as I watched the spectacular mountain scenery and listened to the exotic sitar and drum music on the radio. I was on my way to India! I was embarked on a great adventure which years before I had dreamed about, but which now was becoming a joyful reality.

I reflected back, thinking about the hard years of study, and my graduation from the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. I remembered how that my father had died from a heart attack in our native Texas when I was 19 years old. I recalled how we had hunted together so much and had always had our big dream of driving together some summer, going up the Alaska Highway, having a big adventure together in Alaska. Seeing it with our own eyes!

As a teenager and young man, my father often read books by Jack London, such as *White Fang* and *The Call of the Wild*. He also had a book of poems, which I still have, written by Robert Service, called *The Spell of the Yukon*. Service was a Canadian bank teller who wrote poems about the far north. He is often called "The Bard of the North." Two of his most famous poems are "The Cremation of Sam McGee" and "The Shooting of Dan McGrew." In the summertime, at a village near Fairbanks, Alaska called Ester, there are daily performances of his poems. The place is called The Malamute Saloon. Dad would have loved it!

But Dad had increasingly debilitating heart disease during the last few years of his life, and our Alaska plans had to be put on hold. It was a couple of months after Dad's death that a friend and I departed Texas to drive

up to Alaska in late May that year. We drove in the pickup-camper my father had given me. I was 19 years old at the time.

Fighting Forest Fires

We were hired that summer in Alaska to fight forest fires with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). In fact, we were hired the same day we arrived! I had a lot of adventures! Once, during my second summer of fighting forest fires, a friend and I almost got burned to death when the wind changed suddenly and hit us with a wall of dense smoke and flames.

The wind whipped erratically as we dropped to the ground. For several long, terror-stricken moments we were confused and blinded by the dense smoke; the

A BLM fire crew prepares to fight a forest fire in interior Alaska.

The author at the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania (19,340 feet)

popping, hissing inferno seemed to surround us. The heat was terrifying! And it was closing in. By chance, we found that the area six inches or closer to the ground was relatively free of smoke. Finally, we found a clear route and crawled swiftly to safety.

I enrolled in the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, and after some years graduated with a B.A. degree in Speech Communications. I minored in Secondary Education and got a teacher certification. Incidentally, at UAF, I learned to skydive and made 19 parachute jumps. Also, about a year before I graduated, I made a summertime trip to East Africa, spending six weeks in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda. During that trip, I joined a climbing team and went to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro (19,340 feet). That was a five-day climb. Later, I went to Ngorongoro Crater (shown in the opening scenes of the John Wayne movie "Hatari"), the Serengheti Plains, and other fantastic places. I had a wonderful time!

During the five-day climb of Kilimanjaro, it turned out that three of the dozen climbers were American

THE TANGANYIKA FLAG
AND THE TORCH OF UNITY
WERE FIRST RAISED HERE ON THE
9TH DECEMBER 1961
BY LIEUTENANT A.G. NYIRENDA
TANGANYIKA RIFLES
"WE, THE PEOPLE OF TANGANYIKA, WOULD LIKE
TO LIGHT A CANDLE AND PUT IT ON TOP OF
MOUNT KILIMANJARO WHICH WOULD SHINE
BEYOND OUR BORDERS GIVING HOPE WHERE
THERE WAS DESPAIR, LOVE WHERE THERE WAS
HATE, AND DIGNITY WHERE BEFORE THERE
WAS ONLY HUMILIATION"
JULIUS K. NYERERE

Metal plaque at the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro, Tanzania.

Zebras at dawn, Amboseli, Kenya

Large male lion at daybreak, Masai Mara, Kenya.

Peace Corps volunteers! We talked for hours about the Peace Corps and its accomplishments. One of the volunteers, Buff MacKenzie, invited me to visit his school in Mwatate, Kenya, which I did.

Back in Alaska, I threw myself into my senior year of studies at the University. During that time, I applied to enter the Peace Corps. Also, during the winter, I began preparations to join a climbing team that would make a summer ascent of Mt. McKinley (Denali). I graduated in May that year and began the climb the following month. Ray Genet was our leader. We reached the summit on the 14th day (20,320 feet) and it took us six days to descend. In later times, I used to visit Ray at his cabin in Talkeetna. Years later, Ray Genet died after reaching the summit of Mount Everest, in Nepal. Ray's body, I have heard, is still up there on Everest at around 28,000 feet, in the "death zone." I wonder if Ray is smiling?

The author (right) with Gregory Craig and Bob Carlson at the summit of Mt. McKinley (Denali), Alaska, 20,320 feet.

After climbing Mt. McKinley, I accepted the invitation to join the Peace Corps and went to Afghanistan and later, to the Fiji Islands in the South Pacific. In Fiji, almost every day after my teaching work was finished, I would go diving on the nearby coral reefs. Everywhere I traveled throughout the world, I had wonderful experiences that really opened up my mind and expanded my consciousness. Wow! It was great!

The Legendary Khyber Pass

And now, I was on a bus winding through the Khyber Pass, bound for Pakistan and ultimately India and Nepal! Life is good!

The Khyber Pass, from one end to the other, is actually about 14 miles or so in length. Austere warning signs at both entrances to the pass advise travelers that under no circumstances should anyone attempt to spend the night in the region. After dark, there are

Street scene, Rawalpindi, Pakistan.

many groups of smugglers, bandits, and just plain low-life cutthroats who will gleefully kill someone just to steal a wristwatch. At night, the Khyber Pass is one of the most dangerous places on the planet and it should be avoided then.

The bus rolled into Peshawar, Pakistan, just about lunchtime. It was a dusty, sunny autumn day as we moved slowly through an amusing menagerie of camels, donkeys, horses, water buffaloes, and human caretakers wearing turbans and baggy clothing. I would have to be careful where I stepped!

Shouldering my Kelty backpack, I walked into the crowded bus station to ask how to get to the train station. It looked like I was the only Westerner in the room. A turbaned, strong-looking man was issuing tickets and speaking in Farsi (Persian) with someone. I could understand some of what he was saying. Apparently, he was from Landi Kotal, a Pakistani frontier town near the Khyber Pass which has a notoriously large gun bazaar and a wild west type of atmosphere. Within reach of his left hand was a Remington model 700 bolt action rifle.

Upon seeing me, he smiled and nodded and courteously directed me to the train station. I took one of the local three-wheeled taxi scooters and was soon at the train station. Earlier, I had thought about spending the night in Peshawar, at the inexpensive Khyber Hotel in Saddar Bazaar. On weekend trips I had stayed there before. But I decided to keep the momentum of my journey going; I would go on the evening train to Rawalpindi and Lahore. Besides, the all night train ride would save me the cost of a hotel and get me closer to my destination.

Nanga Parbat and the Baltoro Glacier

I briefly met a couple of my Peace Corps friends from Afghanistan at the train station in Rawalpindi. These two young men were on vacation and were headed north to Skardu, Pakistan and ultimately to trek on the Baltoro Glacier in the direction of K-2, the second highest mountain in the world. The flight from Skardu would take them near Nanga Parbat (Naked Mountain), a famous and beautiful Himalayan peak whose steep slopes are often swept clean by avalanches.

As the call came to reboard the train, they told me about anti-American riots that had been going on locally because a newsletter from the American Embassy had contained a small drawing of the prophet Mohammed. Of course, the newsletter had only been intended for American personnel, but a copy had fallen into Pakistani hands and was circulated. For Muslims, any drawing or image of Muhammed is a sacrilege, so outraged crowds of Pakistanis were attacking and beating any American they could find. My friends were disguised ("in mufti"), dressed like hooded locals and also wearing blankets; they planned to slip out of Rawalpindi that night and head north to Skardu. I shook hands and bade them farewell, promising to see them back in Afghanistan. I was glad to get back aboard the train and be leaving Rawalpindi!

Early the next morning, the train pulled into the Lahore station amid a tumult of noise and activity. I shouldered my backpack and made my way through a troupe of dancing beggars and found a bicycle-rickshaw

driver who would take me to the Asia Hotel, a modestly priced place with air conditioning. It was autumn, but the heat and humidity were still bad.

As I checked into the hotel, the clerk asked me in a pleasant way where was I going? He was writing information into a ledger. For a moment, I was not sure what to say. In those days, there was very bad blood between Pakistan and India. After several awkward seconds, the clerk leaned compassionately forward and whispered: "Are you going to India?" he asked. "Yes," I replied honestly. "Very well," he said, "I shall write that you are going to Wagah, Pakistan, a border town on the way."

I thanked the helpful clerk and headed up to my room. After a shower and a change of clothes, I headed out to visit the Lahore Museum.

The Zam Zam, a huge and ornate cannon which Rudyard Kipling wrote about in his classic "Kim," sits impressively in front of the museum. I touched the enormous weapon and marveled at some of the colorful, exotic history which actually happened in that part of the world.

Inside the Lahore Museum, I was particularly interested in seeing a famous statue of the Fasting Buddha. This exquisitely made piece of art depicts how Guatama Siddhartha, the Buddha, looked as he neared the end of many days of fasting, sitting beneath the tree of enlightenment, the Bodhi Tree.

The next morning I was on my way to Wagah. I stepped out of the dusty bus and passed through Pakistani Customs. Then with the other travelers, I shouldered my backpack and walked about 400 yards through a no-man's-land buffer zone to reach the border of India. A long line of turbaned men carried boxes of

grapes on their heads. Tall, fragrant eucalyptus trees swayed gently in the sunny, morning breeze. The dry earth was a reddish-orange color. India! I had made it! A young man from a small town in Texas, from a modest background, I had always wanted to see exotic India with my own eyes. And now here I was!

Arriving in India

I smiled broadly and said a cheerful "Hello" as I handed my passport to the Indian Customs official. He nodded stoically, noticed my beaming grin, and traded sidelong glances with some of the other customs officials. As he found my India visa and stamped it, he asked if everything was alright. I assured him yes, and told him that I was just delighted to be visiting India. He cast a few more sideways glances as he handed me

Crossing the border from Wagah, Pakistan, into India.

my passport, said "Welcome to India," and waved me through.

Several buses were waiting nearby for the short trip to Amritsar, capital of the province of Punjab. Amritsar, meaning "pool of nectar," is the holiest city of the Sikh religion, a spiritual path started by Guru Nanak in the 15th century. The provincial name "Punjab" means "Five Rivers," or five waters (panch ab) in the Punjabi language.

I checked into a small hotel, booked passage on a bus to depart the next morning for Srinagar, and found a bicycle-rickshaw with a sun shade. The driver was a pleasant man and we made a deal for a tour of Amritsar which would include a stopover at the Golden Temple of the Sikhs. Some tourists decline using rickshaws because they think they are dehumanizing, or something like that. Then the drivers don't have any business and go hungry! That is really dehumanizing! The drivers appreciate the business, and, of course, if you're going up a steep hill you can use your common sense by getting off and walking to the top with the driver.

At the Golden Temple of the Sikhs

At the Enclosure Entrance to the Golden Temple, I gave my driver money for a soft drink and told him to wait outside in the cool shade. At the entrance I read the instructions which basically said that everyone is welcome and the rules are: everyone must remove footwear and socks and wash feet at the entrance (a steady flow of cool, clear water through a depressed area in the white marble floor made this easy), everyone must

At the Golden Temple of the Sikhs, Amritsar, Punjab Province, India.

have a head covering of some sort (a helpful Sikh told me I could tie my red bandanna pirate-style on my head and that would be acceptable), everyone must bring an offering of flowers (many flower shops and vendors are within a few steps; I bought a small bundle), and lastly, no one may use tobacco products, drugs, or alcohol within the temple grounds. I was ready! With a smile, I joined the flow of Sikh pilgrims and stepped into the entrance.

After a few steps, the entrance opened into a large, open-air enclosure perhaps about the size of four football fields. Most of the area was a large, shallow pool of water (considered the amrit, or pool of nectar) in which a white, marble walkway led to the center. In the

center of the pool was the Golden Temple! In the bright, afternoon sun it was spectacular!

In one corner of the surrounding courtyard, there is a perpetual soup kitchen, of sorts, a charitable feeding place for anyone who needs a meal. I returned later in the afternoon and had a tasty barley-lentils soup with tortilla-like chappatis. It was good! I was impressed by the generosity and industriousness of the Sikhs.

Inside the Golden Temple

Walking slowly, I followed the flow of pilgrims and went on the walkway into the Golden Temple. A wonderful, jasmine-scented incense wafted out of the large open doors. Many of the entering Sikhs laid face down on the marble floor, in a full prostration, showing their reverence at being in such a holy place.

I walked upstairs, where within glass enclosures, elderly Sikh holy men are constantly sitting and reading out loud from ornate copies of the Sikh holy book, the Granth. I was deeply moved and impressed that the Sikhs would be so open and willing to share the most sacred place of their religion, even with a non-Sikh like myself.

Only about three years before that time, en route to East Africa, I had a three-day stopover in Rome and had gone inside St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. I'm not Catholic (in this lifetime) but I was welcome there, also. For me, St. Peter's was impressive but dreadfully serious, cold and austere (the white marble Pieta added to the somber mood). The mood in the Golden Temple, by contrast, seemed joyful, yet serious, like a spiritual celebration.

The next morning I was riding the bus to Pathankot and from there to Jammu, in the Himalayan foothills. After a hot, mosquito-infested night at a cheap hotel, I left Jammu on the bus that would take me to Kashmir, all the way to Srinagar. The scenery was spectacular as the bus bounced and swayed on the precarious mountain roads, negotiating hairpin turns and passing near cascading waterfalls.

Finally, late in the afternoon, we ascended a mountainside and approached the entrance of a huge, concrete tunnel where we paused a few moments. The letters above the entrance said:

> **Welcome to the Vale of Kashmir**
> **Heaven on Earth**

We passed through the tunnel and there below us lay a beautiful, green valley with forests and lakes and craggy, snow-capped Himalayan peaks on either side. An abundance of sweet-smelling wildflowers were on both sides of the road. So this was Kashmir! I was glad I had listened to my mother's friend and decided to come here.

Nearing sunset, the bus pulled into the station in Srinagar. I unloaded my Kelty backpack and took a seat in the station to think over my next move. My Berlitz guidebook suggested that one of the many houseboats in Srinagar could be an interesting place to stay.

I watched in amusement as Indian tourists from other parts of India were being hustled and sweet-talked by hotel employees, houseboat owners, and taxi drivers. Mostly they were speaking in English because

it is often considered a neutral, common language, whereas Hindi, the national language, is mostly spoken in the northern half of India.

A dignified, neatly dressed man wearing a shirt and slacks walked up to me and said "Is sahib looking for hotel accomodation?" I pressed both of my open hands together, palm to palm, in front of my chest in the traditional greeting, smiled, and said "Namaste." Literally, the greeting means "I salute the divinity within you." The man smiled broadly and gave the same greeting.

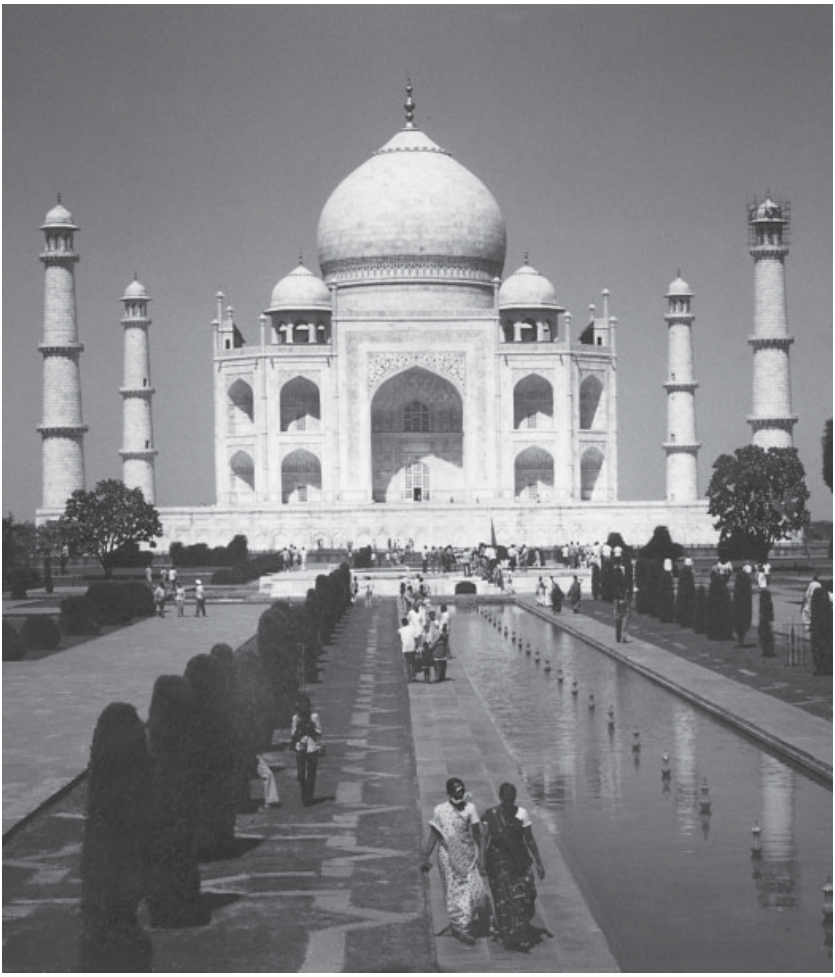
"Yes," I replied, "I am looking for a place to stay." He then told me that he is the owner of a beautiful houseboat called the Mount Everest and that it is nearby on the Jhellum River, in the area called the Bund. And for a modest sum, I could have a room with

Houseboat scene, Srinagar, Kashmir, India

breakfast included. Soon, we were walking on our merry way to the Mount Everest. I turned in early after dinner that evening, breathing the sweet aroma of flower blossoms as the houseboat rocked gently in the water. And so, I thought, this is the Vale of Kashmir!

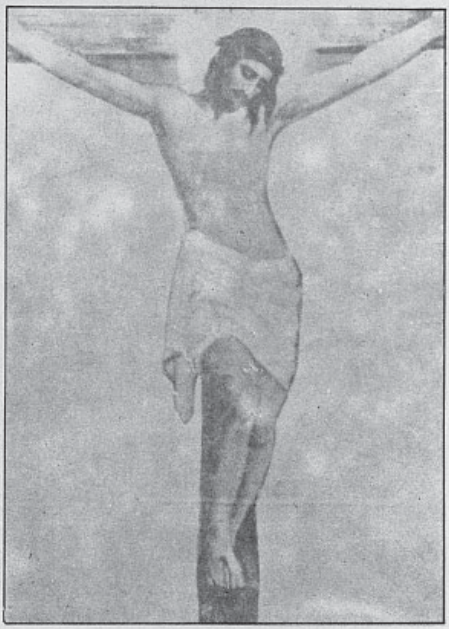
After a delightful breakfast of eggs, toast with jelly, fresh fruit, and Darjeeling tea, I decided to stay there at least two or three nights. I felt somehow intrigued by the area and that I should investigate and learn more, even if my visit were brief. Kashmir is like a real-life Shangri La, incredibly beautiful and charming.

Ahead on my journey, I had chosen a pretty full plate: a visit to the Tibetan refugee community at Dharmsala, India, then on to New Delhi, the capital. Next, to Agra, to visit the Taj Mahal. Then onward by train to Varanasi (Benares), the holiest city of the Hindus, on the magnificent and sacred Ganges River. Then northward to the spectacular Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal. After preparations in Kathmandu, I would be walking for 20 days, or so, to reach Namche Bazaar and then to the base camp of Mt. Everest. Later, from an airstrip at Lukla, I would fly back to Kathmandu. Finally, I would visit Pokhara, in western Nepal, see the Annapurna peaks, also Dhaulagiri, and Machapuchare (fishtail mountain), and then return to Afghanistan.



CHRIST IN KASHMIR

AZIZ KASHMIRI
Hons. in Urdu and Literature
Editor, Urdu *Daily Roshni*
Srinagar, Kashmir



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Chapter 3

A Meeting with the Author of *Christ in Kashmir*

Follow your bliss.
—Joseph Campbell

That sunny, autumn morning in Srinagar I felt the intuitive pull to find a bookstore. I walked out of the houseboat and under some nearby shade trees where I could see a taxi was parked. The driver was reading a newspaper. I took that as a good sign. It was.

The driver was friendly and spoke good English. I told him I was looking for a good bookstore which would have a lot of books in English. He smiled and said that he knew of just such a bookstore and that it

was not a long drive. I asked how many rupees the drive would cost. The driver said 15, I offered 10, we settled on 12 and were off.

The bookstore was in a quiet part of the city. As I entered and looked around, I saw it had a laid-back and rustic kind of 1950's atmosphere. Ancient ceiling fans squeaked softly and the owner, a middle-aged man wearing European clothes with a necktie, sat reading a book near the cash register. A steaming cup of tea was at his side. I looked around and saw that I was the only customer. That was fine with me.

I browsed around in the front part of the bookstore for a minute or two. There were some books in English, yes, but nothing of much interest. Then I turned and found a display of yellow-colored books near the front of the store. The thing that got my attention was a drawing on the book cover which showed Jesus Christ on the cross and the title in large letters: *CHRIST IN KASHMIR*. Below the title was the author's name: Aziz Kashmiri, Honors in Urdu and Literature, Editor Urdu Daily Roshni, Srinagar, Kashmir.

I picked up the book, glanced through it, and stared at it again in wonder. It was as though many pieces of a puzzle were beginning to fall into place. What Edgar Cayce had repeatedly said in his trance readings, that Jesus had indeed lived and studied in India. What Levi Dowling, the Union Army Chaplain, had written about in *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, telling about the time that Jesus had lived in Kashmir, and elsewhere, in India. The strange occurrence about my mother's long-lost friend and his mysterious insistence that I must go to Kashmir. And, of course, the very strange bottle of beer from Murree,

Pakistan, which brought about the bizarre revelation from Mr. Wilson: that Mary, the mother of Jesus, is buried in northern Pakistan! And that Jesus had lived much of his life in Kashmir!

Could everything just be a coincidence??? Or in my search for hidden truth, could I be about to find much more than I had ever imagined? I held the book in my hand then (as I do at this moment) and wondered: should I take the next step? Should I follow my bliss? I closed my eyes and meditated silently for some long moments, using my mantra, and asking for guidance. I got a clear "Go ahead."

I walked over to the shop owner and gave a friendly "Namaste" greeting with my palms placed together. The gentleman placed his book down and returned the greeting with a beaming smile. After paying for *Christ in Kashmir*, I asked the owner if by any chance he might know the author personally? He smiled broadly again and said," Oh yes, Aziz Kashmiri is a good friend of mine." Whereupon, I explained that I was a young American visiting India, with a keen interest in the subject of Jesus in India. And I wondered if I might possibly be able to visit with the author and discuss the subject?

The Daily Roshni

"Well, he is the editor of the Daily Roshni, a newspaper here in Srinagar," said the shop owner, "Let me give him a phone call and see if he is in his office." He picked up a heavy, black 1950's telephone and dialed a number. For a few moments he spoke in Kashmiri, then handed me the phone and said, "He will speak with

you." I introduced myself and repeated what I had told the bookstore owner.

"How about right now?" he said, "I have just finished a meeting and I have some free time." "Yes," I replied," that is fine; I will be there shortly." I handed the phone back to the shop owner and asked if he could write directions to the Daily Roshni and tell me a fair price for a taxi. He nodded, wrote quickly in Kashmiri, handed me the paper, and said," About 12 rupees would be a fair price." We smiled and shook hands and I thanked him for his help and said farewell.

I stepped outside the bookstore, and under the shade trees was parked the same taxi which had brought me there! The driver was relaxing and reading his newspaper again. This time I noticed he was reading the Daily Roshni. We smiled at each other and I handed him the piece of paper with directions. He nodded and I said," Twelve rupees?" He smiled and nodded and motioned for me to get in.

We headed in what seemed to me to be a northeasterly direction and we were soon going up a hillside. The buildings were mostly white-colored, like white stucco or whitewashed adobe. The taxi stopped on the hillside among some white buildings. "You are here, sahib," said the driver. I paid him, gave him a tip, and thanked him. "Good luck, sahib," he said, and drove away.

I looked around among the buildings and in the narrow street and realized I couldn't read anything. All the street signs and building signs, both letters and numbers, were in Kashmiri language. Well, I have strong faith in divine order, and I certainly didn't believe that God was just going to dump me somewhere. So I relaxed, took a few deep breaths, and just waited.

Within a few seconds, some children came running and laughing from an alleyway. They spotted me and ran up close, staring in amusement and catching their breath. Soon there were more children, standing there smiling and looking at me in silence. I was thankful they were not throwing rocks, flicking boogers, or yelling obscenities. I have seen that sort of behavior in some other parts of the world. But, these children were respectful; they even wore clean clothes.

Meeting Aziz Kashmiri

I smiled, held up both hands and said slowly in English: "Does anyone know where I can find Aziz Kashmiri?" A well-mannered boy wearing white clothes, who looked to be about six years old, raised his hand straight up, as if he were in school. I pointed at him and he said, "He is my father; I will take you to him." I said, "Let's go."

We headed off at a brisk walk through a maze of narrow passageways and corridors. Then we ascended some stairs that went up the side of one of the white stucco buildings. We went through a door and entered a large, rustic kind of office with hardwood floors. Most of the north wall was composed of windows of a peculiar kind of wood and glass framework.The view through the windows was a breathtaking panorama of the jagged, glistening ice peaks of the Himalayas. A large desk was near the windows, and two gentlemen wearing European-type clothing were in conversation there.

I thanked the boy who brought me there and gave him a piece of candy from my jacket. He said thanks and scampered out of the room. The older of the two

men pointed at a piece of paper and spoke softly to the younger man who nodded and left the room. The older man then took several steps toward me, smiled warmly, and extended his right hand. "Are you Mr. Martin?" he asked. "Yes," I replied and shook his hand. "I am Aziz Kashmiri, editor of the Daily Roshni," he said, and gestured for me to sit in the chair in front of his desk. "Would you like some tea?" he asked. "Yes, I would," I replied. He clapped his hands softly and asked a servant who appeared in the doorway to bring us tea.

Later, over steaming cups of tea, we had a far-ranging discussion about the subject of Jesus in India. To my surprise, I found out that in India itself there is a very long-standing tradition and folklore that Jesus did indeed live in India. **Moreover, the tradition states that Jesus was in India for two separate long periods of time!** And, these were firstly, the teenage and 20's years of learning and preparation, and secondly, his return sometime after the crucifixion and spending the remainder of his life in India. Mr. Kashmiri even showed me a written statement made by Jawaharlal Nehru, the famous Prime Minister, concerning his belief in the tradition that Jesus had lived in India.

During our discussion, Mr. Kashmiri mentioned that the tomb of Jesus Christ is in Kashmir and it can be visited by the public! My mind reeled for a while at that one! Why hadn't we ever heard or seen anything about that in the United States!?! I will discuss this with the reader in abundant detail later, in the chapter "How Do You Like Your Jesus?" Mr. Kashmiri went on to explain that the local name used for the tomb is Yuz Asaf, meaning the "Leader of the Cleansed." Two stone carvings at the tomb, showing the man's feet, indicate that he had

been crucified. An excellent amount of corroborative research, identifying Yuz Asaf as Jesus is in Holger Kersten's book: *Jesus Lived in India*.

I was told in later years, that some people believe that the actual tomb of Jesus is located a few miles outside of Srinagar, on a mountainside at a secret location, where it will not be disturbed. It is said that the Yuz Asaf tomb in the Rozabal section of the Old City is the "public access" location which everyone can reach easily, even physically handicapped people. That would make sense.

The Hemis Monastery at Leh in Ladakh

He also told an intriguing, firsthand story which is a real hot potato! During the 1960's, he had been invited to join a group of other Indian journalists to visit a frequently off-limits area in northern Kashmir called Ladakh. Once there, his group had gone to the rarely-visited Hemis Monastery at the town of Leh. I remembered that Levi Dowling had mentioned in the *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* that Jesus had spent about two months there after leaving Tibet. At Hemis, the Buddhist priest giving them a tour explained that because the Chief Abbot had recently died, it would be possible for them to enter and look around in the Archives, in the Monastery's basement area. But, when the new Abbot is chosen, the Archives are closed again to the public, for years or even decades.

As Mr. Kashmiri walked around the ancient, dusty corridors, shining his flashlight, he glanced at huge stacks of Tibetan documents and hundreds of portraits.

The portraits were drawings made on thin slabs of stone. The colors looked almost like chalk colors, pastels, or perhaps some kind of oil colors he was not familiar with. But still, the colors were clear and vivid although they were obviously very old. Almost all the drawings were of monks with shaved heads, wearing red or orange robes, sitting in the lotus position.

Jesus Sat for a Portrait!

But one drawing was very different! It showed a very robust-looking man with a full head of fairly long hair and a full beard! The hair and beard were of a reddish-brown color, the man was smiling, and wearing a brimless, simple cap on his head, similar to the kind of cap that Nehru sometimes wore. He was wearing the traditional, baggy pants and shirt of the region, and a warm-looking vest. He looked strong, and had the appearance of a man who is frequently outdoors. He looked to be perhaps in his mid or late 20's.

Puzzled, Mr. Kashmiri found the monk giving the tour and asked if he knew who the man was. The monk squatted down, pointed his flashlight at the base of the drawing, and rubbed off a layer of dust with his fingers. He blew a little, squinted, and began to mouth some sounds to himself. Apparently, the writing was very old and the monk said it appeared to be Sanskrit or Pali. The monk had difficulty sounding out the name, but said it was something like "Yashosh "and that the remainder of the writing was something to the effect: "traveling Hebrew scholar and holy man who visited this monastery during the time of the Abbot... ." The monk remarked that the time frame was about 2,000 years ago.

Mr. Kashmiri's mind reeled! This was a drawing of Jesus Christ himself!!! And, it was made while Jesus was sitting right in front of the artist, posing for the picture! Talk about a hot potato! Wouldn't millions of dedicated Christians all over the world be keenly interested in seeing such a picture?

It happened that the flash unit for Mr. Aziz's camera was broken at that time. He asked the monk several times for permission to take the drawing outside, into the sunlight, but each time the monk refused. Soon thereafter, the tour came to an end, the doors of the Archives were locked, and Mr. Kashmiri was never able to return. A new Abbot was chosen shortly after that time.

I asked Mr. Kashmiri if he knew of anyone since that time who might have seen that drawing? He said, to his knowledge, he did not know of anyone who had. Nor did he even know if the Archives had been opened since then.

We sat in silence, drinking our steaming tea, for some time. My own mind was boggled in a sort of pleasant and profound way. And I was completely sober and serious! Wow, wow,wow, wow, wow! What are the implications of all this? Could it possibly be that out of the billion plus, or so, living Christians on planet Earth, that I myself might be putting together the pieces of an important puzzle in a unique way? Gradually, I was beginning to see "gross consistencies" as I researched more and more about Jesus in India.

In my own mind, I had already come to the conclusion that Jesus really had lived in India. The concept which was harder for me to accept was that Jesus had somehow survived the crucifixion, later recuperated, returned to India, married, and had children. And, had

died in his very old age and been buried. In my case, it took me about 20 years of spiritual growth, and the accompanying wisdom, strength, and flexibility to finally understand and accept this. For me from my viewpoint now, those events just mentioned do nothing to diminish the tremendous importance of the life and teachings of Jmmanuel/Jesus. Much more on this later.

A Lifetime of Research about Jesus in India

I stood up to stretch my legs and walked over to a case of bookshelves a few steps away from Mr. Kashmiri's desk. It was perhaps as high as the top of my head or a little higher; it was maybe four feet or so wide. It appeared to be entirely filled with books about the subject of Jesus in India! Perhaps half, or more, of the books had been printed in India; many of them were in English. Many others were in foreign languages; some in exotic tongues. Some of the books looked quite old. But they all seemed to have some relation to the subject of Jesus in India. I marveled at the books and examined a few of them. There were also large stacks of typewritten materials on the subject.

At that time, I was about 24 years old. So in one sense, I was kind of young and stupid (just joking; there's nothing wrong with being young—or old). Back then, I used to speak from the heart a lot. That is, I used to often say what I really felt. I turned to Mr. Kashmiri and asked: "Why is the subject of Jesus in India so important to you personally?"

He straightened up in his chair, then took a deep breath, and stood up, stepping to the windows nearby.

He turned his head toward me and said, "The subject of Jesus in India has been my hobby during all my adult life." He then turned and faced the windows and the exquisite view of the Himalayan peaks in the distance.

Still speaking from the heart, I spoke clearly and said," I don't mean to offend you, but it seems to me that your interest in the subject of Jesus in India is not a hobby, but more like an obsession. Why is that?"

Mr. Kashmiri continued to stand at the windows, staring out at the distant mountains. I walked over to the windows also, and stood a few feet away from his right side, looking at the mountains. It was a spectacular view! I knew that Mr. Kashmiri had heard my question, so I didn't press him for an answer. Besides, I wasn't in a hurry that morning. We stood there in the pleasant sunlight in a kind of silent reverie for at least two or three minutes.

Finally, Mr. Kashmiri turned toward me, smiled, and said, "I have my reasons." It was a cryptic answer, but that was okay. I didn't intend to intrude on anyone's private matters. But, anyway, I had still had a wonderful, enlightening conversation and I was very thankful that I had met such a remarkable gentleman. I didn't expect that there would ever be any further connection about the matter. There was! And how!

Of incidental note: the Epilog of *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* mentions that ten Israeli tribes had emigrated in the past from Israel and settled in what is now Afghanistan, northern Pakistan, and India's Kashmir. Aziz Kashmiri strongly confirmed this Hebrew heritage in our conversation and in his book. He said that in every aspect of life the Kashmiri people resemble Jews. He also said that the origin of the name Kashmir comes from

the Hebrew word "Kashir" meaning one who takes the "Halal" (slaughtered) meat.

He described the Hebrew facial features, such as the prominent, hooked noses of Kashmiris. Also, the customs, rituals, and many linguistic clues, such as the many Hebrew place names and identical names such as "shaul" meaning "fox" in both languages. He mentioned many other things from his book, such as the distinctive, curved shape of the chopper used by butchers, found nowhere else in India.

In Mr. Kashmiri's book, *Christ in Kashmir*, on page five it states: "History bears evidence that in 721 B.C., Sargon the Second captured the Kingdom of Israel and all the Jewish inhabitants were captured and exiled. Most of the tribes came to Iran, Afghanistan, and India, and settled down in these lands." Elsewhere in his book, there is considerable evidence that Moses came to Kashmir and is buried there. For a wealth of information about the Hebrew connection to Kashmir, I encourage the reader to examine *Christ in Kashmir*.

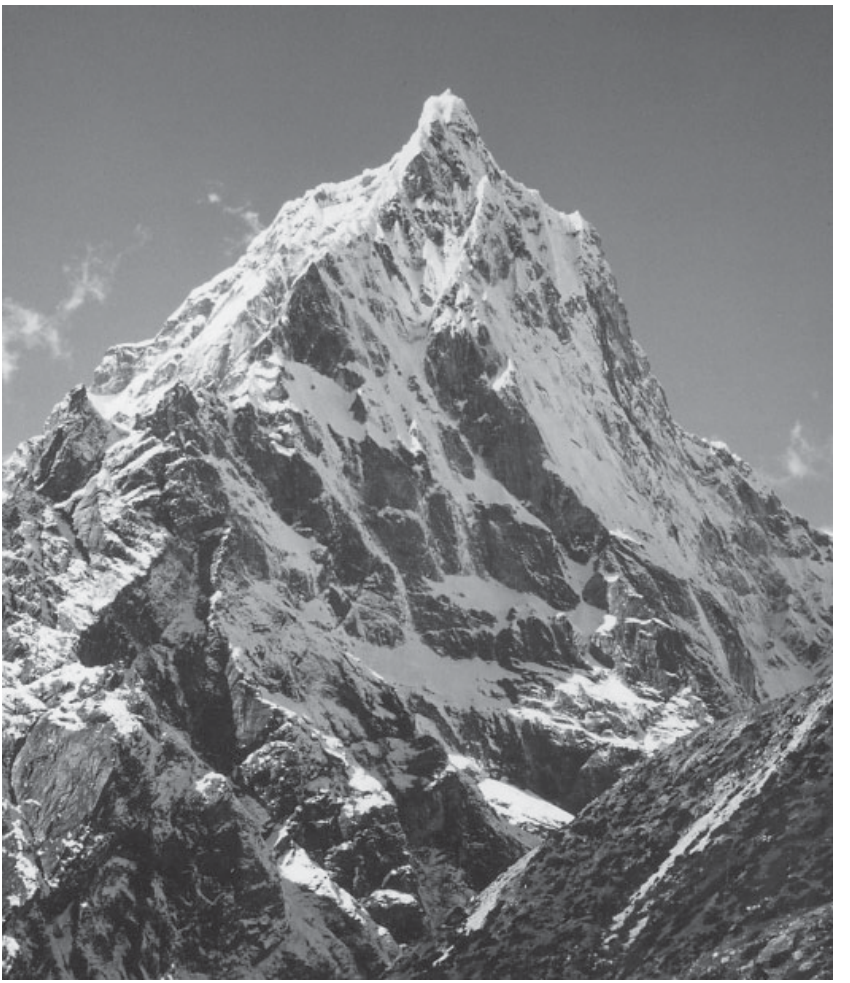
Visiting the Tomb of Jesus

After I left Mr. Kashmiri, I later that day went to the tomb of Yuz Asaf on Khanyar Street in the Rozabal section of Srinagar. I entered the ancient building which protects the tomb and found myself alone with my thoughts. I put some money into a collection box for the upkeep of the tomb. I knelt down on the stone floor and inwardly asked permission to put my hand on the stone sarcophagus. I felt agreement and rested my hand on the cool stone, breathed deeply, and thought. From outside, I could hear the sounds of children playing. It was sunset.

Only a couple of hours before, I was reading in Mr. Kashmiri's book that in 1939, the Viceroy of India, Lord Irwin, who was a devout Christian, went to Kashmir to see the tomb for himself. Another famous visitor at the tomb was Sir Francis Younghusband who wrote "Kashmir."

Well, I thought, if this really is the tomb of Jesus Christ, to me it was humorously ironic that I was the only human being on the planet right then who happened to be visiting the grave site. And ironically, I intuitively felt that might be exactly the case. Sometimes, truth is stranger than fiction.

In a thought related in the sense of high irony, I remembered a scene from the movie "The Ten Commandments." Prince Moses had decided to go into disguise as a Hebrew slave and work in the mud pits. He saw an elderly slave man who was hit in the stomach with an axe. Moses carried the man out and held him as he died. The dying man said his only regret was that he had not lived to see The Deliverer. He took a long, questioning look at Moses and died. And, of course, Moses was the Deliverer!



Chapter 4

I Learn about the "Billy" Meier UFO Case and *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*

Nothing stands in the way of an Earthhuman's spiritual progress, but the Earthhuman himself.
—Semjase, Pleiadian lady visitor

If the reader will bear with me, let me jump forward in time several years for the sake of the continuity of my Jesus in India material. And by the way, my journey in India, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan went basically as planned. It was a fantastic trip! The experiences I had really opened up my mind and spirit in very positive and unforeseen ways. I will tell about

the rest of the journey in more detail later in this book.

Several years after I returned from that first trip to India, I was working with a small publishing company in a town in rural Illinois. It happened that the publisher had a regular subscription to the UFO Newsclipping Service from Lucius Farish, #2 Caney Valley Drive, Plumerville, Arkansas, 72127—8725. It came at the beginning of each month, and I eagerly looked forward to reading it.

I became interested in UFOs and the idea of extraterrestrial visitors after my father and I had a strange experience when I was 13 years old. We saw a silvery, hovering disk one moonlit winter night when we were by ourselves, camping and fishing in a remote area along the Colorado River in Texas. My Dad said, "Let's never tell anyone about this."

Later, when I was 20 years old and living in Alaska, I saw an identical-looking disk one night, a glowing UFO, while I was hunting in a remote area near the Wood River. At that time, I also had a "missing time" experience, after which I could not remember what had happened. But, I felt extremely positive and "opened up" spiritually. Years later, when the time felt right, I met with Dr. Leo Sprinkle at Laramie, Wyoming, and under hypnosis, found out what happened during the missing time. The details of that experience are in Chapter 11 of this book.

"Where are the UFO books?"

From the age of 13 onwards, whenever I visited a bookstore, I always asked the clerk "Where are the UFO books?" Through the years, I bought and read dozens

of UFO books, practically every one I could find. But despite the wonderfully tolerant and broad-minded attitude of my parents, I got a lot of criticism and ridicule from many other people. Young and old. So I learned to clam up, conceal my thoughts, and sort of "shut down" my feelings. I also believed in reincarnation, and I learned to keep quiet about that, too.

So it was refreshing that my publisher friend believes in UFOs. He even writes books about them! So after work one day, I was reading in the UFO Newsclipping Service and came across a book review of *Light Years* by Gary Kinder, published by Atlantic Monthly Press of New York. The book review was by a newspaper reporter who seemed to have a snotty, arrogant attitude. It was as if he were cynical, thinking "I don't think this could possibly be true, so I'll ridicule this book."

Light Years tells the story of Eduard Albert "Billy" Meier, a man in rural Switzerland, who has been meeting with human beings from the Pleiades, a cluster of stars almost 500 light years away. Billy was told that the humans from the Pleiades make the journey in about seven hours. About three and a half hours is needed to reach the threshold of light speed. Then the beamship is converted to an energy configuration, attached to tachyons, and sent through hyperspace to a pre-determined destination. The vast bulk of the distance is covered in a tiny fraction of a second. The beamship exits hyperspace, re-converts to physical matter, then slows down for three and a half hours to reach Earth. Meier is the contactee because of his soul identity. They have worked with him in many past lifetimes.

After reading the book review, I got into my car and drove about 100 miles to the Chicago suburbs. I found a

bookstore in a mall, went in, and bought a copy of the book. During my free time in the next five days, or so, I carefully read the whole book, from front cover to back.

The Ring of Truth

To me, the book had the ring of truth. And although I have not met Mr. Meier, his honesty, goodness, and wisdom became apparent as I read the book. Later, I found other books related to the case, and read them thoughtfully. Some of these were, the large picture book *UFO Contact from the Pleiades, Volume One* and (same title) *A Supplementary Investigation Report*, both by Lt. Col. Wendelle C. Stevens (ret.). I enjoyed reading these books very much.

Also, I found several fascinating videos about the case: *Beamship, the Meier Chronicles*, also, *Beamship, the Movie Footage*, and *Beamship, Metal Analysis*. I watched and re-watched the videos many times and was intrigued. I particularly liked to watch *The Meier Chronicles* and ponder over the spiritual teachings from the Pleiadians. I loaned that video to quite a few people, including a chapter of MUFON which showed it at one of their meetings. I was told later that in the last five minutes of the video, when one of the 21+ foot diameter beamships is hovering in the distance, perhaps 200 yards away, and the camera zooms in on the ship, a professional photographer in the audience jumped to his feet. They said he began cursing and yelling that the footage is for real! That it is a large object at a considerable distance from the camera! I thought so, too.

I later found a wonderful documentary about the case called *Contact*. I loaned this to a lot of friends,

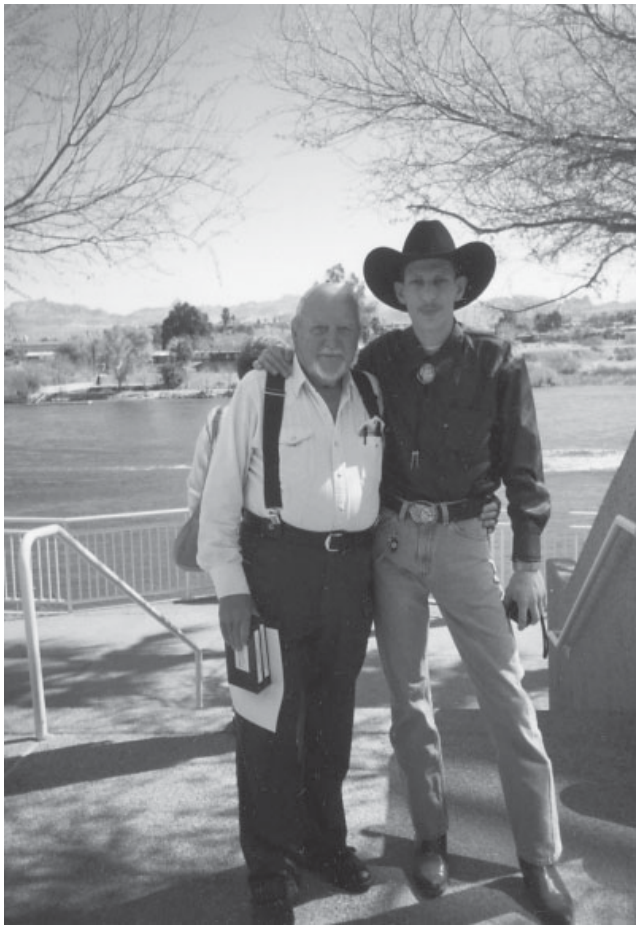
also. It gives a good overview about the Billy Meier Case. Later, I found a series of cassettes which were made by Randolph Winters. The cassettes are adapted from material in the Contact Notes, which are about 1,800 pages of transcripts of the conversations between the people from the Pleiades and Billy Meier. I listened to the cassettes with great interest.

Also, I repeatedly watched a video made by Randolph Winters called *The Pleiadian Connection*. I was later able to meet Randolph Winters and hear him give some talks. Then I was able to buy volume one of the *Contact Notes*, published by Col. Wendelle Stevens. I was enthusiastic to read the material. Later, I bought and read volumes two, three, and four of the *Contact Notes*. The material is marvelous! Deeply spiritual and inspiring. Also very scientific and insightful.

Several times I was able to attend talks given by Guido Moosbrugger, a close friend and confidant of Billy Meier, who lived at the Meier farm. Guido has also been an eyewitness of the Pleiadian beamships, and one of his photographs of a beamship appears in the book *Light Years*. He has also written a German language book about the case called *And Still They Fly*. Guido is a very wise and spiritual man and I have always enjoyed his talks about the Pleiadians.

Later, I met Billy Meier's son, Methusalem, who gave an excellent speech at the International UFO Congress at Laughlin, Nevada. During the week-long conference we spoke frequently about his father's experiences and the importance of the mission. Phobol Cheng of Cambodia, who is a representative to the United Nations, spoke also at the conference. She presented first

person testimony of the UFO sightings and contacts she witnessed as a teenager while living at the Ashoka Ashram in India. Those events were in connection with Billy Meier who was studying there at that time with her grandfather.



Lt. Col. Wendelle C. Stevens (ret.) and Methusalem Meier, Laughlin, Nevada.

Maybe the reader can see what I'm getting at: I strongly believe that Billy Meier is telling the truth and the visits by human beings from the Pleiades are for real! The more that I read and found out about the case, the more "gross consistencies" (to use investigator Tom Welch's phrase) I found in the material.

Time Travel

At one point, I was reading an issue of a magazine which was formerly put together by Randolph Winters called "Contact, Erra to Terra." Some advertising told about a series of cassette tapes which included one with the following write-up: "Jmmanuel (Jesus Christ And The Concept Of God). Jmmanuel the man, known as Jesus Christ. Who was he and what did he really teach? Billy was allowed to travel back in time to the year 32 and talk with Jmmanuel about his mission and how it relates to our future. From the book called *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* (the original writings of Jmmanuel), a discussion of the story of Easter. Was Jesus really the son of god? The Pleiadian concept of gods, and their cognitions of Creation."

I was taken aback for a while. Perhaps only for a few hours, but more likely for two or three days. I am pretty broad-minded and flexible in my thinking, and everything I had read and looked at until then had made good sense. But I was kind of boggled by the concept that time travel really could be possible and furthermore, that someone could actually go back in time and meet Jesus Christ himself and have a conversation with him! One thing I had learned firsthand about my own travel experiences in exotic foreign countries is that most

people are very envious! Most will not admit they are so jealous, but they are. And partly, at least, I was envious about someone getting to meet Jesus!

In September, 1992, I happened to be listening one evening to National Public Radio. The program was "As It Happens" with Alan Maipland and Geoffrey Stevens. They were interviewing Dr. David Deutsch, one of the world's leading physicists, at Oxford University in England. They were talking about "a future quantum mechanical view"; specifically, they were talking about time travel! Dr. Deutsch said: "Once a thing has been shown to be possible in physics, technology soon follows." He explained that regarding time travel, scientists in 1992, were at a comparable point to scientists in the 1930s only three or four years away from the invention of television! They first knew that television was possible; then, they built the technology. He explained that once the theoretical constructs are worked out, and scientists know something is "do-able," then within a few years, the actual device will be built. The interviewer asked if time travel will become a reality? The answer: "Yes, certainly!"

That interview got my attention! It woke me up to brand-new possibilities. As I thought more about it, the concept did not seem so crazy. Why couldn't it be possible? Why did reality have to conform to my own limited expectations? Lots of people I deal with do not believe in space aliens, reincarnation, karma, telepathy, or anything paranormal. Consequently, they remain closed in their thinking, and don't read or watch anything that would challenge their narrow view.

As the Hindus call it: "the warehousing of a soul." Which means to keep the body alive, fed and clothed, but the

soul is not really attempting to grow spiritually. There is no attempt to gain knowledge and wisdom, to seek and discern truth. *The whole purpose of being incarnate in a human body is to evolve spiritually, to seek wisdom and truth, and to incorporate it into one's daily life*. Or as the Pleiadians might put it, the important thing is to learn about Creation and its laws, and to live and evolve in harmony with it. To evolve spiritually, we have to make mistakes and learn from them.

And, as I understand it, the Pleiadians say that a "power elite" has basically had a stranglehold on the masses of Earth people for thousands of years. The "power elite" does not want people to grow spiritually, because then they would develop intuitive, telepathic, and other abilities which would empower them. People then would be fearless and could not be controlled by a secret government, or anyone else. People could also then quickly discern truth from falsehood and recognize the false "belief systems" which have been foisted upon them to control them.

The Talmud of Jmmanuel

I listened attentively to the cassettes about Jmmanuel and was impressed with the material. That led me to seek out *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, published by Wild Flower Press of Mill Spring, NC (see Resources at the end of this book).

The TJ is an ancient Aramaic document discovered in 1963 by Billy Meier in the form of scrolls encased in preservative resin. This was after a Greek Orthodox priest named Isa Rashid discovered the actual burial cave of Jmmanuel (erroneously called Jesus Christ). The

scrolls, which were buried under a flat rock in the tomb, were later translated from Aramaic into German by Isa Rashid and edited and encoded by Eduard Albert "Billy" Meier.

I was greatly impressed with *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* and I still am! I had frequently read the Gospels during my childhood and early adult years, and had always felt they had been tampered with, or altered, somehow. The TJ, for me, had the ring of truth. It was while I was reading the latter part of the TJ, that I came across material which told specific details about events following the crucifixion.

Some of those details were that Jmmanuel had been in a state of near-death, but not death. And, after Joseph of Arimathea had returned with some friends of Jmmanuel's from India, they had entered the tomb through a secret, back tunnel entrance. The men from India were healers; they brought special salves and medicines and ministered to Jmmanuel for three days. After that time, he was strong enough to walk and move about some.

Of incidental note: the famous historian Josephus recounts a true story about an occasion when he was returning to Jerusalem and found that three of his friends had been crucified by the Romans. Josephus went immediately to his friend the governor Tiberius, who granted his request and had the three men taken down from the crosses. And one of the three men survived! The point being, that despite the excruciating ordeal, some people have survived a crucifixion. For additional details, see *Celestial Teachings* by Dr. James Deardorff.

The details about Jmmanuel further explain that he recuperated in hiding in Damascus for about two years.

During that time, he was joined there by his mother, Mary, his brother Thomas, his disciple and close friend, Judas Iscariot, and others.

Of significant importance: the TJ makes it clear that Judas Iscariot, the treasurer, one of the 12 apostles, was not the betrayer of Jmmanuel! The real betrayer was named Juda Ihariot, the son of the important Pharisee Simeon. After Juda Ihariot's suicide, the Jewish high priests intentionally had the names switched, and spread the false rumor. The lie also was: "Look, one of his own people betrayed him, so how can his teachings be any good?" Please see The Talmud of Jmmanuel *and* Celestial Teachings *for the entire story.*

Also, it was Jmmanuel himself, in his flesh-and-blood body, who confronted Saul of Tarsus (later to become Paul) one night on the road leading to Damascus. To read the complete account, see *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, Chapter 33, page 267. Briefly, what happened was that Jmmanuel prepared a concoction of chemicals and ignited them at night, temporarily blinding Saul. Jmmanuel also spoke sternly to Saul before slipping away.

Of incidental note, the TJ contains an earlier passage in which Jmmanuel and Saul had a face-to-face meeting one night with a heated exchange of words. At the end, Jmmanuel picked up a stick and chased Saul away! And then Saul, his thoughts on revenge, met with Juda Ihariot (the real betrayer) the son of the Pharisee Simeon, to discuss how to seize Jmmanuel and turn him over to the authorities. See Chapter 26, page 201, in the TJ for the entire passage. And Saul (changed to Paul) is the darling of the Fundamentalist Christians! And has anyone forgotten that Saul is a cold-blooded murderer? Who brutally killed defenseless men, women, and children

because they were Christians! And this man is a hero and role model?!?

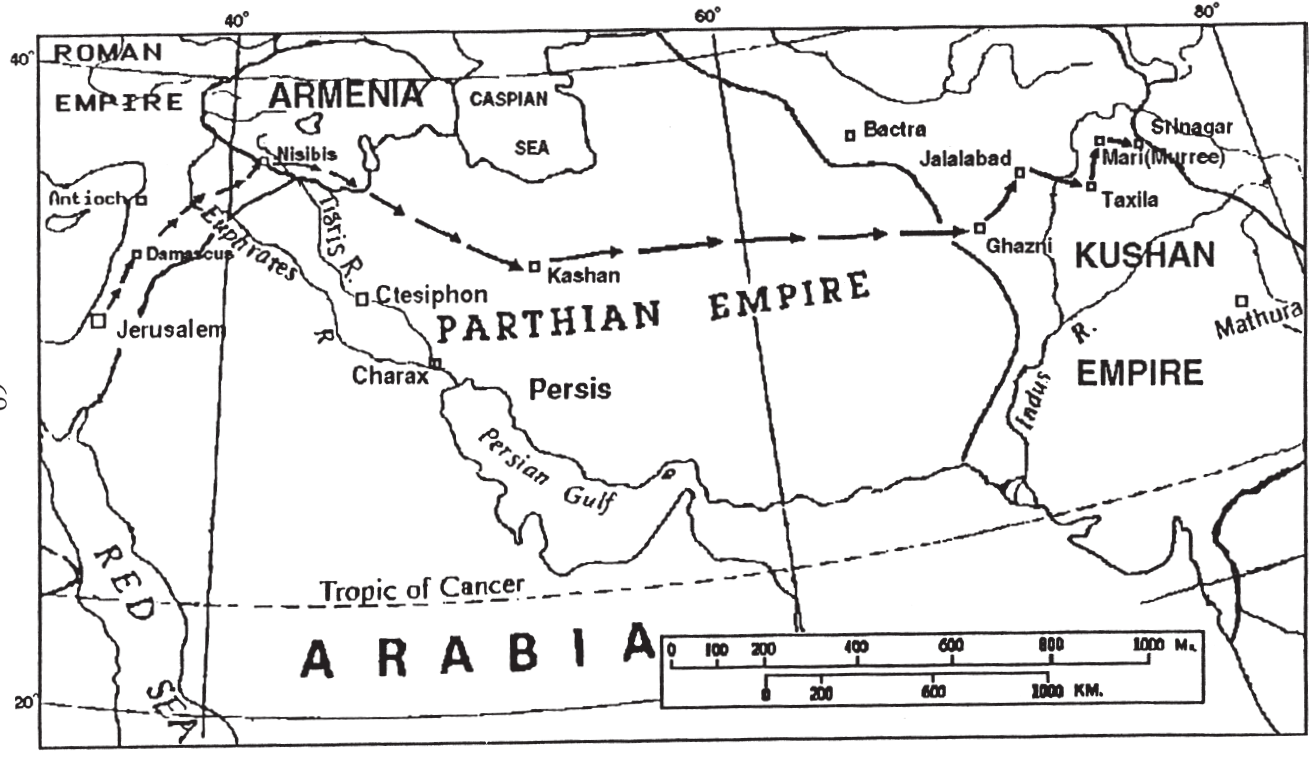
Returning to India

To continue with events: following the year in Damascus, Jmmanuel and his close group joined a caravan journeying to India. It was in what is now northern Pakistan that Jmmanuel's mother, Mary (then advanced in years) became very ill and died. The town of Murree, Pakistan, in the Himalayan foothills is named for Mary's burial place. Her tomb there can still be visited now. And incidentally, the beer named Murree Beer is, in a strange way, the connection by which I became involved with this story.

The remainder of the story is that following his mother's death, Jmmanuel went to Srinagar, Kashmir, in northwestern India. There, at about the age of 45, he married a pretty, young woman and they settled down to a happy married life. The woman bore him several children, the oldest of which was a boy named Joseph. Jmmanuel continued to go on journeys, give spiritual teachings, and perform healings throughout his lifetime.

Judas Iscariot was Jmmanuel's neighbor and close friend. He frequently accompanied Jmmanuel on his journeys and was his diligent scribe. He died at about the age of 90 and was buried near Srinagar. Jmmanuel lived to about the age of 110 and was buried also at Srinagar.

Following his father's death, his eldest son Joseph took the scrolls of parchment, encased in resin, which contained *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, and traveled to Jerusalem. There, in the burial cave in which Jmmanuel had

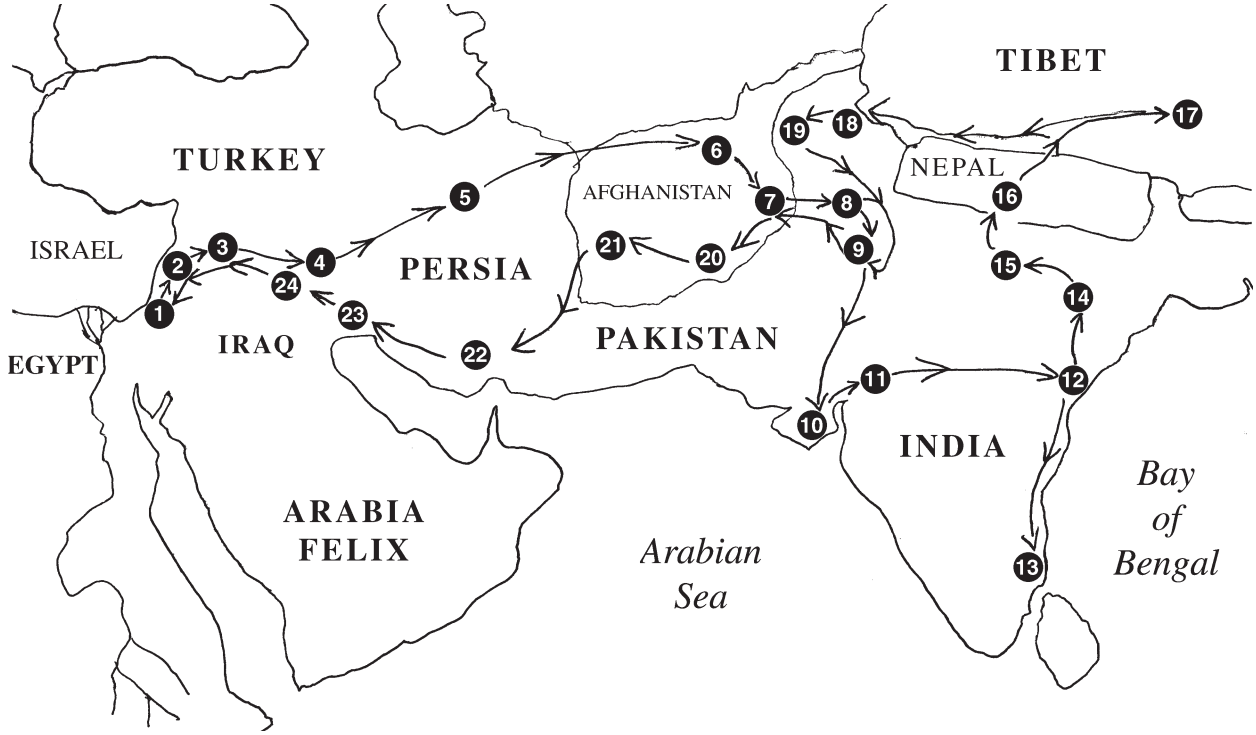


Probable return to India route taken by Jmmanuel (Jesus) and his party following the crucifixion.

lain, Joseph buried the scrolls under a rock within the cave which was partially filled in with sand and dirt. He believed that would be the safest place. In 1963, Eduard Albert Billy Meier was directed to find the scrolls and with the help of Priest Isa Rashid the scrolls were translated from Aramaic to German. Isa Rashid and his family were later killed by Israeli security forces.

On a personal note: I am deeply impressed and inspired whenever I read *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* and also the companion book *Celestial Teachings* by Dr. James Deardorff. Anyone who is a truthseeker should examine these books and give them a fair audience. In my opinion, *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* really is proto-Matthew, that is, the original, uncensored gospel of Matthew. It is spiritual dynamite!

An important point for anyone who may have been reading the writings of Kal K. Korff who makes masses of claims against the reality of Eduard Meier's contact experiences: Dr. James W. Deardorff has written a well-researched and scholarly report in 1996 entitled "A Refutation of False Claims and Distortions by Korff." If the reader would like to obtain a copy of that report, please look in the Resources section at the end of this book and contact Jonah Publishing.



The possible route which 13-year-old Jmmanuel (Jesus) may have taken to India. And his possible return route in his 20s. (1) Jerusalem, (2) Damascus, (3) Palmyra, (4) Baghdad, (5) Rhagae, (6) Bactra, (7) Kabul, (8) Rawalpindi, (9) Lahore, (10) Palitana, (11) Ujjain, (12) Jagannath, (13) Madras, (14) Rajagriha, (15) Benares, (16) Kapilavastu, (17) Lhasa, (18) Leh, (19) Srinagar, (20) Kandahar, (21) Farah, (22) Persepolis, (23) Susa, (24) Seleucia.

Chapter 5

How Do You Like Your Jesus?

When you tell the truth to someone, you should first have one foot in the stirrup of your horse.
—Turkish saying

How do you like your coffee? With cream or milk? With sugar? Black? How do you like your ice cream? With chocolate syrup? With nuts? With fruit? How do you like your Jesus?

I grew up in a fundamentalist Christian church in which it seemed to me that most of the preachers and elders talked far more about the apostle Paul than about Jesus. Personally, I loved to really focus on Jesus, his life, his teachings, and his miracles.

But intuitively, somehow, I always felt I wasn't getting the whole, true story. It sounded to me like a lot of

lies had been put into his mouth. It sounded to me like a lot of censorship. I would be expecting him to say really hard-hitting, profound things which beautifully would be just ringing with truth. Things so right-on and stingingly accurate that people would gasp, narrow their eyes a little, and nod in deep agreement.

But it wasn't there. The things I found Jesus saying in the gospels seemed to me to be okay, but at the same time bland, colorless, and often vague or obscure. What, I often wondered, had he **really** said? And, of course, **what about the many missing years?** Of course, I am speaking of the period of time from when Jesus was 12 years old, at the Feast of the Passover, until his baptism by John. *Think about it: do we grasp the potential significance of those missing years in the life of Jesus?* The teenage and 20's years are critically important for growth and the development of one's values and personality.

The only transitional verse in the Bible dealing with the missing years, comes at the end of the second chapter of Luke (Luke 2:52). These are the words, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man." What the hell does that mean? *For many years Jesus was just humming away in his father's carpentry shop, making chairs and tables? And Jesus magically was gaining great spiritual wisdom by going for long walks in the hills?* And the next chapter in Luke begins with Jesus being baptized by John and then beginning his ministry.

Almost everyone conveniently overlooks a very important point about ancient Jewish culture: *Jewish boys at the age of 12 or 13 years were expected to get married!* Boys who would become rabbis, that is, teachers, were particularly expected to marry! Therefore, there would

be tremendous social pressure for a brilliant and very promising boy like Jesus to marry. A family's reputation was at stake. Such a boy who did not marry could be considered immoral and very strange, or worse!

The simple solution for a very special boy like Jesus, who had different plans and goals, was to secretly run away from home. Jesus had other siblings, with normal goals, who would stay at home. Jesus could write a goodbye letter, telling that he would return after some years. Then he could join a camel caravan of merchants, bound for India. Jesus could volunteer to work as a camp helper and assistant. With Jesus physically absent, his parents could make up any respectable story they wanted to tell people—and, the pressure would be off.

To me, the missing time following the feast of the Passover, when Jesus was 12, followed by the jump to the year when he began his ministry, is a blatantly obvious coverup. And, what is being covered up is, obviously again, something **important**, which they do not want you to know about. *Someone deliberately never put the "lost years" into any of the Gospels. Why?*

For one thing, if the Christian Bible explicitly says that Jesus Christ went to India, lived there for years, and actively studied Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, that would be showing that Jesus was interested in other religions. Perhaps he was even respectful of other religions! And, if the Bible shows that Jesus learned healing arts from Hindu holy people, how to walk on water, make five loaves feed 5,000 people, and other miraculous events, the status of Christianity might be profoundly tainted or changed for some people.

More importantly, the status of Christian priests and preachers could be changed! *Churches are keenly interested*

in getting people's money and possessions! If you have any doubts about that, go visit a city with some Christian universities, and spend some time in the nursing homes and hospitals. You will see the cheesy Christian vultures, wooing elderly people to will their home, business, ranch (or all of the above) to their church group. Of course, those well-paid vultures are the minions and lackeys of the wealthy Christian churches and universities.

If Jesus (Jmmanuel) condemned such money-grubbing, non-spiritual behavior, that truth would go over like a lead balloon with the greedy priests and preachers. What if Jesus condemned the Hebrews for murdering neighbors, stealing land, and acting self-righteous? And if Jesus expresses belief in reincarnation, karma, human extraterrestrials, metal space ships, space travel, and so forth, the ideas would be pure heresy! We can't have the boss man talking heresy, even if he really did! That's why the gospels were not faithful to their original source.

As author Janet Bock points out in her excellent book *The Jesus Mystery:* "In examining historical records of the early Christian church, it became evident that early church councils, especially the First Council of Nicea in 325 A.D. changed many points of doctrine, and it was possible those missing years were expunged because they did not coincide with the political needs of a growing church."

The Power Elite and The Belief Systems

Let me express some of my own understanding about what the Pleiadians told Billy Meier in the Contact

Notes. *One thing they said is that for thousands of years on planet Earth a "power elite" has controlled earthhumans by foisting "belief systems" including governments and organized religions upon the masses of people*. Those belief systems are to the detriment of the people: they keep people disempowered and in spiritual darkness.

The power elite are just delighted with that situation. That is what they want. People who are disempowered can easily be controlled, exploited, and manipulated! The power elite are content to keep a low profile and basically stay out of public view—and public scrutiny!

The effect of the belief systems is something like: "Okay, you peasants and serfs! Obey your king or you will rot in the dungeon! Obey Holy Mother Church or you will burn in Hell for Eternity!" Of course, the common people are scared witless and shitless! They hustle to conform, be submissive, and certainly to not rock the boat!

The thing the power elite does **not** want, the thing they dread and consider most odious, is for people to become spiritually empowered. That is, when people are genuinely seeking truth and evolving spiritually, they will develop strong intuitive abilities. With those abilities, they will easily discern truth from falsehood. They will immediately know when their leaders and governments are lying to them.

About governments on this planet: the Pleiadians basically say that all of them are terrible. They are dominated by power-hungry, arrogant people who seek to dominate, control, exploit, and manipulate the masses of people. Conversely, governments should be trying to help people grow spiritually and assisting them in that

direction. For example, on their home planet of Erra, which orbits the star Taygeta, in the Pleiades, the people live according to the laws of Creation, and their High Council gives what could be called suggestions.

Furthermore, as people evolve spiritually they will become more and more fearless. They will be less subject to intimidation and threats. Spiritual empowerment may also include enhanced telepathic abilities, clairvoyance, telekinesis, and other abilities. All in all, a human population which is really starting to spiritually evolve will not only be more empowered, they will be greatly more ethical, much less prone to violence and warfare, and keenly concerned about the environment. They will also be very critical and insightful thinkers!

So how do you like your Jesus? Let's talk a little about Divinity, Salvation, and Resurrection. Big subjects. Hot potatoes! Yes, they are touchy, very important, and sensitive issues because they are parts of the most cherished beliefs of most Christians. And, roughly speaking, when we count Protestants and Catholics together, we may be talking about approximately 1,000,000,000 (One Billion) to 1,400,000,000 more or less, human beings on planet Earth who consider themselves Christians, of some sort.

Let's consider the information from the Pleiadians, as I understand it. They say that the one we call Jesus Christ was actually never known by that name during his lifetime, but was actually called Jmmanuel (spelled with a "J"). They say that Jmmanuel's soul origin is from a planet called Lahson, in a distant part of our Milky Way Galaxy. And that Jmmanuel's soul is part of a small group of very spiritually advanced souls which volunteered, thousands of years ago, to come to Earth and

undertake the difficult mission of bringing the spiritual teaching of Creation and its laws.

Jmmanuel (Jesus) Was A Human Being

They say that Jmmanuel was a human being like you and I. He was very spiritually advanced and possessed great knowledge and wisdom. He was thus able to perform what we call "miracles." He did not wish to be worshipped or treated as a god. He was not peddling salvation, scaring people with hellfire, or demanding money. He did want people to listen to his teachings about Creation and its laws. He wanted people to think for themselves, to use logic and reason, and to seek knowledge and wisdom. He wanted people to learn from their mistakes and to grow spiritually. He wanted people to get in touch with their eternal souls which are omnipotent. Jmmanuel wanted to be an example for people.

One of the noteworthy points from *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* is that the apostle, Judas Iscariot, was not the betrayer of Jmmanuel! The betrayer of Jmmanuel was a man named Juda Ihariot, who was the son of an important Pharisee named Simeon. It was Juda Ihariot who, overcome with remorse, hanged himself with his own belt. Upon swiftly hearing of this, his father Simeon and the other ruling Pharisees gave orders that his body would be quickly buried in the Field of the Potter. And, they ordered that the lie be spread that Judas Iscariot—one of his own apostles—had betrayed Jmmanuel. Therefore, how could his teaching be any good???

And, of course, Judas Iscariot, like the other apostles, was in hiding —in fear for his life—and could not refute

the lie! And also, the lie protected the real wrongdoer, Juda Ihariot, and more importantly it protected the father, Simeon. Since Juda Ihariot was dead, he would never confess or recant. His body would soon decompose. And, since the two names were almost identical, the lie would be believed from the beginning. And it was! But the lie will not stand.

The Truth will Prevail

There is a wonderful saying, "The truth will prevail." The truth will win. I encourage interested readers to examine a copy of *Celestial Teachings* by Dr. James Deardorff, and also *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, translated by Julie H. Ziegler, at a library or bookstore. Read, search, think, and draw your own conclusions.

Some further details are that Judas Iscariot was a close friend of Jmmanuel, as well as his best scribe and chronicler. After the crucifixion, and the years spent at Damascus, when Jmmanuel returned to India, not only was he accompanied by his mother Mary, and his brother Thomas, but also Judas Iscariot.

Jmmanuel survived the crucifixion in a state of near-death. Joseph of Arimathea realized that Jmmanuel was not dead, but in a state of near-death. He told no one, but swiftly went to Pilate and got permission to take the body down. Pilate was surprised that a man with no broken bones would be dead so quickly, but gave permission.

Cloth was wrapped around the body and it was taken to Joseph of Arimathea's new tomb, which was freshly hewn out of stone. After placing it, a large stone was rolled over the entrance. Unknown to others, Joseph

had seen to it that a second, tunnel entrance existed for the tomb. With friends of Jmmanuel from India who were healers, they entered through the tunnel and ministered to Jmmanuel for three days with salves and medicines. After three days, Jmmanuel was well enough to walk. They left at night and went secretly to Damascus.

Jmmanuel recuperated for two years in hiding in Damascus. He was joined there by his mother, Mary, his brother, Thomas, Judas Iscariot, and others. During that year, it was Jmmanuel himself who confronted the misguided Saul of Tarsus one night with a flaming mixture.

Later, Jmmanuel returned to India, where he had spent his youth. Along the way, his mother Mary became very ill and died at what is now Murree, Pakistan, in the Himalayan foothills. He settled at Srinagar, Kashmir, in northwestern India, where at about the age of 45 he married a pretty, young woman. They had several children. Judas Iscariot was a neighbor and lifelong friend who died at about the age of 90. After a long and happy life, Jmmanuel died at about the age of 110 from natural causes and was buried near Srinagar.

For the complete story of these events, please consult *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*. The Resources section at the end of this book has more information.

The point of that information for me is that Jmmanuel wanted to be an example for human beings. He wanted for humans to listen to what he was teaching about Creation and its laws. He wanted people to seek knowledge and wisdom and to strive to grow spiritually. He wanted to show people the possibilities which any human being can eventually achieve if they grow spiritually.

Let's talk about Divinity: basically, Christians are taught that Jesus is the son of God. And furthermore, that Mary's pregnancy was an immaculate conception —that no man was involved with the pregnancy. And also, that Jesus is the only son of God and therefore, anyone in a different religion or on a different spiritual path is going to burn in hell for eternity.

Putting Jmmanuel (Jesus) on a Very High Pedestal

When we make Jesus the son of God, we immmediately set him up to be worshipped as God. Of course, this means we put Jesus up on a very, very high pedestal. Which means, his value as an example is largely destroyed. In other words, when people exalt Jesus to God-status, his human being-status becomes confusing for a lot of people. Many people say something like: "Jesus could forgive and do so and so because he is the son of God, but I'm an ordinary human so you can't expect me to forgive or behave like Jesus."

Along with the worship of Jesus as the son of God, comes the big-ticket item of Salvation. Basically, the idea is to worship Jesus, call on his name, attend your church regularly, donate money to your church, try to be good, and hopefully when you die, you'll get to go to heaven. Then you can sit on a cloud and play a harp for eternity. Does that make any sense? Some people think they can attend church once a year at Easter, call on Jesus' holy name for salvation, live like a skunk the rest of the year, and eventually go to heaven. Does that make any sense either?

Personally, I believe that after the transition we call death, the positive or negative consciousness we have developed, along with our lifetime karma, determines if we go to the upper astral plane, or the lower astral plane. We do not stay in either place permanently. In those places we meet with our spirit guides and review the entire lifetime, like a military de-briefing session. Did we accomplish our mission? How did we affect each human individual we interacted with? Did we learn our important lessons? Then with our spirit guides, we chart our plans and objectives for the next lifetime. We may return to Earth after some years, many years, or, perhaps only months. Eventually, we finish our lessons, and our soul moves on to a higher realm.

Basically, the Christian religion has distorted the true teachings of Jmmanuel, the one called Jesus Christ. The Christian religion has until now succeeded in using methods of **FEAR** (attend Church regularly, donate lots of money, and will us your property! Or you could burn in hell!), **GUILT**, and **INTIMIDATION**.

The Pleiadians explain that the one we call Jesus Christ was never known by that name during his lifetime, but rather, was called Jmmanuel. They say that his real biological father was a Pleiadian leader named Gabriel. The conception may have taken place by artificial insemination. Joseph was his surrogate father.

They further explain that Jmmanuel's soul origin is from a distant planet called Lahson, located in a star system in the far reaches of our Milky Way Galaxy. His soul is part of a small group of highly advanced human souls which volunteered, thousands of years ago, to come to earth. *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* explains that his

mission is focused on teaching about Creation and its laws. And Jmmanuel is trying diligently to help the humans of Earth to evolve spiritually and make wise decisions.

In my understanding, what we call "God," the Pleiadians call "Creation." They explain that Creation encompasses the entire universe and has consciousness and great intelligence. It reminds me of the "Force" in Star Wars. In *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, Jmmanuel explains that within Creation there are spiritually advanced human beings called an Jshwjsh (ish-wish), or King of Wisdom. These Kings of Wisdom act as governors, or Gods, over various planetary systems. Incidentally, Jehovah was a terribly vindictive and fickle Jshwjsh.

So Jmmanuel explains that God is a human being who acts as governor over the human races and travels from the far reaches of space. *Jmmanuel points out further that each human being possesses a soul which is eternal, reincarnating again and again, through a vast number of lifetimes. Each soul is evolving spiritually at its own rate, making mistakes but learning and growing from those mistakes. And, Jmmanuel explains that each human soul is omnipotent! There is a mystery, but each soul has unlimited potential and ability!* Jmmanuel encourages everyone to truly get in touch with their soul and to use its potential.

Concerning resurrection: Dr. James Deardorff in his wonderful book, *Celestial Teachings* points out that the teachings in *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* remain heretical because they depict Jmmanuel as having survived the crucifixion and as having taught reincarnation, not resurrection. The Resources section at the back of this book gives information about how to obtain *Celestial Teachings*, *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* and other books and materials.

Author's Note:

Where Did the Name Jesus Come From?

The following are excerpts from Dr. James W. Deardorff's *Celestial Teachings* (pages 29-30):

> Now, it is known that the name Jesus is an abbreviated form of the old Hebrew name Y'hoshua, meaning "Yahweh saves" (God saves), and does not have an Aramaic derivation. The Hebrew name "Joshua" is a form of this. On the other hand, the original name J was prophesied to be given, according to the citation from Isaiah appearing in Mt 1:23, is Immanuel or Emmanuel, which means "God with us," and is Aramaic.
>
> . . .
>
> It is Paul who seems most likely to have first given J the name Jesus because he is the one who attained a position of sufficient influence to make such a change stick. As motivation, the meaning of "Jesus" well fit Paul's redemption theology and emphasis of man's sinfulness. "God with us" (Immanuel) just does not touch upon this main theme of Paul, while "God saves" (Jesus) does, since it is shorthand for "God saves us from our sins." By referring to him as Jesus, or, much more often, as Jesus Christ, Paul would only have been making his theological viewpoint easier for others to understand—certainly not committing any sin from his own perspective.
>
> As a precedent for his having initiated the Jesus tradition, we may note that he changed his own name, Saul, into Paul. As further precedent, Paul would likely have known that Moses had changed the name of Hoshea, son of Nun, into Joshua, his successor (Nm 13:8, 16).

Also see pages 87-89 in *Celestial Teachings* for more details on the origin of the name Jesus.

Chapter 6

Journey to Dharmsala, India:
A visit to the Tibetan refugee community and beyond...

The jewel of experience is purchased at an infinite price.

—William Shakespeare

After several mind-expanding days in the Srinagar area, I needed to continue my journey through India and Nepal. I boarded a local bus headed through the town of Jammu, bound for another town called Pathankot. From there, I would change buses and head northeasterly into the province of Himachal Pradesh. My destination there would be the Tibetan refugee community at Dharmsala.

Following the Communist Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959, His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama and his entourage fled Tibet and were given sanctuary in India. The Dalai Lama and several thousand other Tibetans live at Dharmsala in the northwestern part of India. The late Thomas Merton, a famous Trappist Monk and author, once visited the Dalai Lama at Dharmsala in 1968. Also, in the Steven Spielberg movie *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* there is a brief scene which takes place at Dharmsala.

When the bus arrived, I found out that Dharmsala is in three parts: lower Dharmsala, at the bottom of the mountain, is a mostly Hindu town with a somewhat warm and arid climate. Upper Dharmsala is part-way up the mountain and has a mixture of Hindus and Buddhists. The third, and highest settlement on the mountain is called McLeod Ganj and it is almost entirely Tibetan Buddhists.

McLeod Ganj is in a forest of large, beautiful pine trees. The climate there is cool and pleasant and the air is filled with the wonderful fragrance of the pine trees. The first Tibetans I saw were those who boarded the bus at upper Dharmsala: they came running to the bus in a group, laughing and smiling, like happy children. Many of them, both men and women, wore beautiful turquoise jewelry.

Most of the women wore traditional Tibetan dresses called "chupas" in wonderful pastel colors with multicolored aprons. The men wore traditional shirts and pants with tall boots and dark coats tied around their waists. Both sexes often had braided hair. The Tibetans smiled easily and seemed to be genuinely good-natured. Their features reminded me a lot of American Indians.

Tibetan Buddhist prayer wheels at Dharmsala, India.

The bus arrived at McLeod Ganj a little before sunset, as the sunlight filtered through the large pine trees. The village is located high in the Himalayan foothills with a sweeping view of the plains below. The air was cool and filled with a delightful pine fragrance. The central part of the village consisted of two parallel rows of Tibetan-type wood and stone buildings with a wide, stone plaza between them. In the center of the plaza was a large, dome-like "chorten," a Tibetan Buddhist holy place. Two long rows of Tibetan prayer wheels flanked the chorten on either end of the plaza.

A Tibetan Ceremony

As I stepped off the bus and shouldered my Kelty pack, I heard the beautiful, melodic sound of many Tibetan voices chanting softly in unison. I took a few steps

closer to the central plaza and found that perhaps more than 100 Tibetan adults, men and women, were sitting cross-legged on the stone plaza. Many were spinning small prayer wheels in one hand; all were chanting Tibetan mantras, holy phrases. It was such a magical, enchanting scene that I looked all around, expecting that a movie was being filmed.

But it wasn't. There were no movie cameras and as far as I could tell, I appeared to be the only Westerner there at the time. I had just been watching one of those delightful slices of real life which a traveler sometimes happens upon. Because of my Peace Corps training, I was feeling a special sense of respect for other cultures. I discreetly waited quietly under some trees until the devotional meeting ended. Everyone strolled away to dinner, and I found a small hotel called the Kailas Hotel. After leaving my pack in the room, I headed off to find a restaurant.

As I was leaving the hotel desk, I met a young Tibetan monk named Ngotup Tsering. He was from a monastery near Darjeeling (place of the thunderbolt) in northeastern India. He was an assistant to His Holiness the Karmapa. I invited Ngotup to join me for dinner; we went to a nearby place called the Blue Tibet. We ordered both Tibetan and Western food. I tried the traditional Tibetan tea which contains lots of yak butter and salt. Not bad, but I think it is an acquired taste!

Also, I tried tsampa, a Tibetan staple food which is made from ground barley. It is not bad, either. We had a wide-ranging discussion about events in Tibet and what might happen in the future. My heart certainly goes out for the wonderful people of Tibet and their brave struggle against the oppression by the Chinese

Communists. After we paid for our meal, I wished Ngotup farewell and turned in early at the hotel.

The next morning after breakfast, I walked westward through the forest to visit a small chapel I had heard about: the Chapel of St. John in the Wilderness. The day before I was told that Dharmsala was in times past the unofficial summer capital of India. The British Viceroys who governed India, used to escape the stifling summer heat of the plains by spending the summer in the cool mountains of Dharmsala. The chapel I visited is in the midst of many large pine trees, in a beautiful setting. No one else was there at that time. I admired the wonderful stained glass windows and wall plaques with names of "Her Majesty's Ghurka Rifles..." and others.

Later, I visited a Tibetan Buddhist Temple at McLeod Ganj and also looked at the outside of the Dalai Lama's house. A short walk away, I found a group of young Westerners studying Tibetan language at the Tibetan Library and Archives. It is a beautiful Tibetan-style building in which the top of each wall slopes inward from the bottom. I explored a lot of trails in the area, enjoying the mountain scenery. I remember many Tibetans made the polite gesture of sticking out their tongues, which means there are no lies in their mouths. Once, I met a cobra on one of the lower trails. I stood still and let him cross the trail!

New Delhi

New Delhi, the capital of India, was my next destination. The bus arrived about midday. I boarded a three-wheeled scooter taxi after negotiating a fare and was

headed for a low-priced hotel in the area called Connaught Circus. The name Circus comes from a series of circular-shaped rows of buildings in that newer part of New Delhi. I checked into a small hotel owned by a lady from the province of Goa, India, named Mrs. Lorenzo. Goa was settled by the Portuguese and many of the Indian people there have Portuguese names.

I walked after that to the train station to buy a ticket to Agra and ultimately, to Benares (also called Varanasi). There was some excitement in the station because a silvery-disk type of UFO had been seen hovering near the station only a few hours before. From what people told me, a lot of people saw the saucer-shaped craft before it darted away at high speed. Many people were still looking upward, wondering if it might return. I believed them and wished I had seen it also.

Later, I visited the old Astronomical Observatory which is a set of open-air structures and includes a famous pillar of solid iron which, mysteriously, never rusts. I looked at it, touched it, and marveled myself.

Next, I was on my way to the Nepal Embassy to apply for a tourist visa to visit Nepal. Back in Afghanistan, I had gotten the visas to visit Pakistan and India. An amusing scam attempt happened near the Nepal Embassy: an Indian man carrying a woman rushed up to me, acting excited. The woman was moaning and the man said something like: "Sahib, wife very sick! Please give money for hospital!"

I believed them, but needed to change some travelers cheques into rupees. I apparently spoke too quickly for them to understand, as I dashed away to find a bank. After a few steps, I looked back over my shoulder, and saw both of them casually walking away, shrugging

their shoulders and chatting. As if to say, "Oh well, he didn't fall for it." I learned to be careful!

Some Advice for Travelers

A few pieces of advice for savvy travelers: many young people use a leather pouch on a strap with the strap going over one shoulder, letting the pouch rest on one side under an arm. This can be a good way to carry your passport, travelers cheques, airline tickets, and other valuables. An even better way is to wear the pouch underneath one's shirt or blouse. A regular wallet or purse can carry cash for daily expenses. Another good system is to use a money belt which is large enough to hold a passport and other valuables. The money belt should be worn under one's clothing. Of course, it is always best to go to a secure place such as a hotel room or restroom in order to get something out of the pouch of money belt.

In some countries, changing money at places other than banks can bring a much better exchange rate. In some countries it can also be very illegal. Find out what the laws are first. Whether it is legal or illegal, a good rule of thumb is to never change money with a stranger on foot.

Lots of scams involve a very fast and sneaky switching of money. For example: a stranger may approach you on a street and ask if you would like to change American dollars into the local currency, offering you a good rate. He may already have a crisp one-dollar bill curled up in his left hand. Let's say you hand him a 100-dollar bill and he holds it up to the sunlight to examine. Suddenly, he looks behind you, says "Police

coming. Take your money and go!" He quickly hands you a curled-up piece of paper money and disappears into the crowd. Later, you examine the money and find it is a one-dollar bill. This story never happened to me, but I have heard it from others.

The moral from that story is simply: if you change money at a place other than a bank, do so at a store or business place. Remember, a person who owns a store cannot pick up the store and run away with it! A person on foot in a street or bazaar is highly mobile and can run away; a store owner is basically in a fixed location and is much more likely to deal honestly with you.

Putting Your Back to a Wall

Some more tips: if you are eating alone in a restaurant, you can always choose a table at which you can have your back to a wall. In some countries, robbers work in pairs; one can approach you from behind, wrapping his arms completely around you and holding your arms pinned to your sides. Meanwhile, the second robber quickly takes valuables from pockets. Then they knock you down to the floor and both run. If your back is to a wall, they will probably choose easier prey.

My visa for Nepal was ready the next morning. I took an interesting mini-tour of New Delhi for a couple of hours with a Canadian young lady I had met at the hotel. We went in a taxi to the Parliament buildings and walked for a while outside, among the beautifully landscaped gardens. I noticed the Gurkha guards stationed at various entrance ways into the buildings. The Gurkhas are a particular tribe from Nepal who have

distinguished themselves as outstanding soldiers for hundreds of years. They carry a very large, distinctive knife called a "kukri." In Nepal you will see a lot of them.

My Canadian lady friend, Michele, told me that she wanted to visit the zoo that afternoon. I happily agreed to go with her because I love animals also. We first went to lunch at a pleasant, air-conditioned restaurant near Connaught Circus. At a nearby table, a group of ladies who appeared to be from different parts of India were having a conversation in English. The national language, Hindi, is spoken mostly in the northern half of India. So sometimes, English is the most practical common language for a conversation.

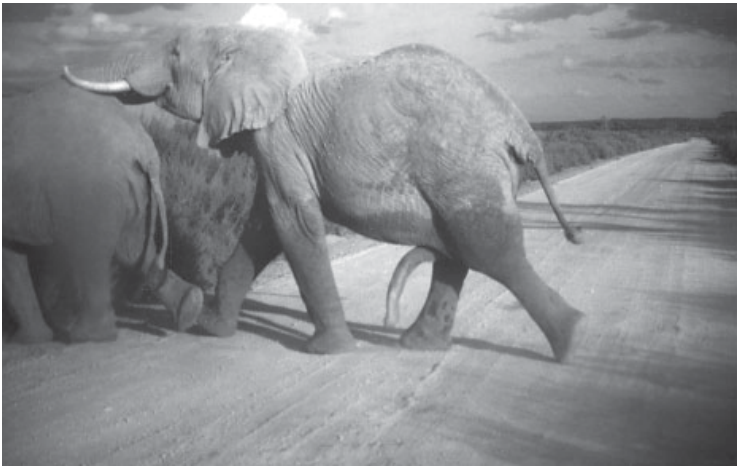
Michele and I arrived at the zoo, paid admission, and strolled the walkways. We were very impressed by the kindness shown by the keepers to the animals. Michele asked me after a while if I had ever been married. I told her I had been close to marriage a couple of times, but travel had interfered. Or we had different goals. And, I had had a lot of different lady friends through the years, but my extensive travels and my interest in reincarnation, UFO's, astrology and other unusual spiritual beliefs had put me out of the mainstream.

Michele told how she had been engaged to a controlling-type of man in Canada and broke things off because she felt like she was suffocating. Traveling all over the world had been important to her, also. She had to catch a flight the next morning to Athens, where she would be meeting friends and they would travel around Europe together. I smiled at her and wished her a wonderful trip. We were still strolling around at the zoo, and we came to the elephant enclosure.

Romantic Elephants

Lo and behold, one of the big male elephants lovingly put his head and trunk on the back end of one of the pretty female elephants. Soon, it looked like the male elephant had five legs, and before long, he mounted her. The Indian people nearby all became quiet, in a kind of amused, spellbound, and breathless way. Michele smiled at me, and I smiled back and impulsively took her hand and squeezed it. She squeezed back and looked deep into my eyes. About then, the elephants made a soft, deep groan. I gave Michele a long kiss.

Later, that evening, we had dinner at the same restaurant and went for a leisurely walk. Back at the hotel, Michele invited me to her room for a drink. We couldn't help but talk about the elephants, and we had some good laughs. Soon, we were kissing and taking off each other's clothes. Before long, we were in her bed in the moonlight, making like elephants ourselves.



Romantic elephants on another occasion: Amboseli, Kenya.

We were up early the next morning. I went with Michele to the New Delhi Airport. We had tea together and visited for a while. We talked about how it seemed sometimes there are too many farewells in life. A hush came over the people in that area, and we turned to see a European woman in a fur coat, walking by. The Indian people were all staring at her, and she was obviously uncomfortable. I heard one Indian man seriously ask another if perhaps she had killed the animals herself.

The call came for Michele's flight and we walked together. We kissed and waved goodbye and she was gone. I watched her plane depart and took a taxi back to the hotel. I finished packing and was soon at the train station, boarding the train for Agra, the city where the Taj Mahal is located. I was in an air-conditioned section of the train; the October days were still pretty hot and humid. The great panorama of the Indian landscape glided past. I wondered if the fabled Taj Mahal would live up to its reputation.

The author at the Taj Mahal, Agra, India.

Chapter 7

At the Taj Mahal and Beyond:
A Dream in White Marble

Some marvels can only be appreciated fully when seen up close and with one's own eyes.

—Anonymous

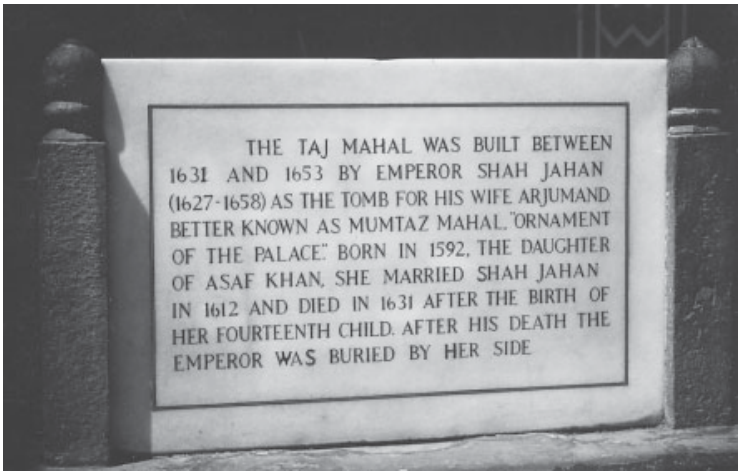
After about two and a half hours, the train pulled into the station at Agra, India. It was getting close to lunch time. Several boys were energetically saying, "Chai! Chai garam! Tea! Hot tea!" as they busily walked along the length of the train, pouring tea into cups made of clay. The great kaleidoscope of humanity in India was streaming in all directions: porters carrying loads on their heads, women in beautiful pastel-colored saris, men wearing robes and turbans of every description,

and clothing of every style, Asian and European. Maybe a snake charmer or two, someone with a bear or monkey on a chain. And, of course, all sorts of beggars: some with missing limbs, eyepatches, crutches, some in dancing troupes, clacking spoons and singing. And also, pickpockets and thieves were somewhere. Ah yes, train stations in India!

I soon boarded a bicycle rickshaw, and after checking into an inexpensive hotel, I was aboard a three-wheeled scooter taxi and on my way to the Taj Mahal. Interestingly, I was not able to see the Taj in the distance, as I had expected. I paid the taxi driver and was let off in a parking lot area. From there, I followed several small groups of people walking toward a stone building and wall which was apparently the entrance. The entry price was very modest. I then walked through the deep shadows and darkness of the entry building to the oval-shaped open doorway which faces the Taj Mahal itself and the inner courtyard.

Many people were audibly gasping at that point! In the bright sunlight, the Taj Mahal is glistening, huge, and exquisitely beautiful! The entry portal lines up exactly with the long, reflecting pool, and the entire scene is framed by the lovely, landscaped gardens on either side. I took a quick picture of the portal with my trusty Topcon 35mm camera, and then walked through and found a vacant area to one side where I could sit in the shade and soak in the view.

It was a clear, sunny day around the middle of October. The weather was pretty warm, but not too hot. The number of tourists that day was light, not many at all. And, interestingly, most of the tourists I saw were people from other parts of India. The Indian ladies,


THE TAJ MAHAL WAS BUILT BETWEEN
1631 AND 1653 BY EMPEROR SHAH JAHAN
(1627-1658) AS THE TOMB FOR HIS WIFE ARJUMAND
BETTER KNOWN AS MUMTAZ MAHAL "ORNAMENT
OF THE PALACE" BORN IN 1592, THE DAUGHTER
OF ASAF KHAN, SHE MARRIED SHAH JAHAN
IN 1612 AND DIED IN 1631 AFTER THE BIRTH OF
HER FOURTEENTH CHILD. AFTER HIS DEATH THE
EMPEROR WAS BURIED BY HER SIDE

wearing their traditional saris, walking along the reflecting pool toward the Taj, made a beautiful sight. As I sat taking pictures, one of the caretakers walked nearby and I remarked: "It is marvelous!" He paused and smiled, saying: "No one who comes here is disappointed; it is more wonderful than any picture can convey."

I walked to a white marble platform at about the midway point of the reflecting pool to take a self-portrait with my small tripod. I remembered once seeing a picture of President Eisenhower taken at exactly the same place. That spot, I thought, must be one of the most photographed locations on the planet. My picture turned out well (on page 98).

One story I heard from one of the caretakers was that during the India-Pakistan War of 1971, several Pakistani jet fighters were sent on a mission to bomb and destroy the Taj Mahal. Thereby, crippling or reducing the amount of tourism to India, and dealing a hard blow to the national morale. Whether a true threat or only a

rumor, the Indian military swiftly covered the entire Taj with huge sheets of dark-colored plastic, making it very hard to see The Taj at night from an attacking jet. They also brought anti-aircraft guns nearby. Fortunately, no attack ever came to the Taj.

Walking close to the white marble walls, I realized for the first time the staggering amount of intricately detailed stone work which had gone into the construction of the Taj Mahal. Built by the Emperor Shah Jehan between 1631 and 1653, as a memorial tomb for his beloved wife, Arjumand, better known as Mumtaz Mahal, "Ornament of the Palace." The Taj Mahal was built by more than 20,000 workmen who labored more than 20 years. Legend has it that after the completion, some of the most highly skilled stonemasons were blinded by the king's soldiers. Thus, they would never use their skills on a lesser structure. Mumtaz died after the birth of her 14th child. Maybe the old king loved her a little too much.

Inside the Taj Mahal

Inside the Taj, the guide explained to a small group of tourists about the intricacy and details of the fine stone inlays and carvings. He placed a small flashlight against one of the white marble walls, and moved it to touch the edge of one of the inlayed flower shapes. About the size of a small coin, the flower lit up to reveal that it was made of perhaps 14 or 16 separate pieces of different colored precious and semi-precious stones. Each petal of that flower was a different stone of a different color. And the inside walls and stone partitions had a mind-boggling number of such flowers and other details!

After illuminating several flowers, the guide smiled in the semi-darkness and raising his hands beside his mouth, he looked upward and said a loud "Om!" It sounded to me like there were at least seven distinct echoes which came, one after the other, from completely different directions. He explained that the echo effect was an intentional part of the building's design. We took turns trying it out. It was novel! I can't remember any other place I've been where the echoes sounded quite like that. One story I heard there was that when Lyndon Johnson was inside the Taj, he let out with a very loud cowboy yell. That must have been wild!

I walked thoughtfully around in the beautifully maintained gardens, looking at the Taj from many angles, and from near and far. The story I had read once was that originally, Shah Jehan had planned to have a second Taj built nearby to be made of black stones. But, before that was begun, his power-hungry son, Jehangir, seized the throne and had his own father cast into prison. Thus, Shah Jehan spent the final years of his life staring out of his prison cell, looking at his marvelous creation, the Taj Mahal.

At the end of the afternoon, I sat with several other tourists and enjoyed watching a spectacular sunset which bathed the Taj in marvelous orange and pink colors. It was awesome! I took a lot of pictures and even thought about staying there another day or two. But, I really needed to continue my journey. I knew also that the fall weather in the Himalayas, in Nepal, was becoming ideal for trekking in the mountains. And the colder weather would not be too far off. My trek to Everest Base Camp and the return would take 20 days, or more. I was excited to think about it!

A young French lady I had met at the Taj joined me for a chicken curry dinner at a nearby restaurant. After saying farewell, I was soon aboard a three-wheeled scooter taxi to pick up my backpack at the hotel. Then at the train station, I pulled out my ticket and boarded the overnight train to Benares (also called Varanasi). Benares is on the holy Ganges River. It is said that every devout Hindu would like to die in Benares. En route, the train would pass through the city of Kanpur.

Somehow, I had imagined that it would be a novel experience to try going third class on at least one of my train trips in India. It would be cheap and I would, most importantly, get lots of "local color"; you know, the "real flavor" of India. Did I ever! It was a time I will never forget! It turned out that many devout Hindus who are about to die will spend their meager life savings to buy a train ticket to go die in Benares. And they ride third class! That part of the train was jammed full of emaciated, suffering humanity. Many of the sick and elderly lay moaning and coughing on the filthy floors. And the stench was horrible!

Normally, I like people and try to be cheerful, but I was getting nauseous. I took my pack and found a friendly train conductor who was able, for a modest fee, to upgrade my ticket to second class and find me a sleeping compartment. I tipped him well, and fell asleep quickly, breathing the sweet air.

The Holy Ganges River

Sometime the next day, the train crossed the Ganges River, going hundreds of yards across an ancient cantilever bridge. The Ganges at that place looked very

wide, and was composed of various shallow channels, with many sandy gravel bars in between.

The Indian people aboard the train were wonderfully excited and joyful to see the holy Ganges. Many people, even the poorest, threw handfuls of coins out the windows into the waters. Many were chanting, some were holding their hands upward, many were crying. For most, it must have been the first time to see the fabulous holy river they had heard about all their lives. I felt humbled to be there at that moment.

The Benares train station was teeming with sweltering humanity that hot, dusty, afternoon in October. As I tried to buy tomorrow's ticket to a place called Patna, I was told that train service there was suspended indefinitely because of violent riots in which numerous people had been killed. The riots were about some kind of price increase about cooking oil, someone said.

My original plan was to travel overland by bus, train, truck, and so on, all the way to Nepal and back to Afghanistan. From Patna, one can go by bus northward to a place on the Indian border called Raxaul. Some people spend the night there and make arrangements to ride, the next morning, on top of a freighter truck into Nepal via a place called Birganj. Then the truck continues on into Kathmandu, the capital and biggest city in Nepal. I had read and been told that crossing the border from Raxaul to Birganj, there is a really spectacular, awesome view of the Himalayas. Especially if you are riding on top of a truck!

I thanked the window clerk at the train station, found a bicycle rickshaw driver, and was soon on my way to a small hotel I had read about called the Jai

Hind. I soon turned on the air conditioning in the small room, took a shower, and put on clean clothes.

Later, I was talking with the helpful desk clerk and decided, under the circumstances, to change my overland plans and jump over the problem area. Namely, to get on an airplane and fly from Benares to Kathmandu. The clerk directed me to a nearby Air India ticket office. Soon, I had a ticket for a flight tomorrow afternoon. I would still get a spectacular view of the Himalayas!

Next, I happened to find the same friendly rickshaw driver I had hired the day before. He was relaxing in the shade near the hotel entrance. We made a deal for a two-hour, or so, city tour of Benares. Specifically, I wanted to visit the area along the Ganges called the bathing ghats, and also to go to a place a few miles away called Sarnath.

The Life of the Buddha

Sarnath is the place where Guatama Siddhartha, the Buddha, gave his first public lecture after he had achieved enlightenment under the Bodhi Tree. That lecture at Sarnath was at a beautiful place called the Deer Park. Also, at the Deer Park is a small museum which contains a famous stone carving called the Lion Column of King Ashoka. This Lion Column is shown on much of the paper money used in India.

En route to Sarnath, my driver took me to a number of fascinating Buddhist temples. Buddhist organizations from various Asian countries have built the temples there because of the historical significance of Sarnath. The temples I visited that afternoon were mostly empty of people, except for one or two caretaker priests. They

smiled at me kindly and nodded and I returned the gesture. Some of the temples contained beautiful paintings of important scenes from the life of the Buddha, Prince Guatama Siddhartha.

Some of the paintings showed Siddhartha doing great feats of archery, or playing an ancient game called kabari, or riding his white horse, Kantika. Others showed Siddhartha with his wife and infant son. Or riding with his charioteer and seeing sick, aged, and dead people for the first time. Still others showed him living with a wandering group of ascetics in the forest, or meditating under the Bodhi Tree and finally achieving enlightenment. Years later, I saw the wonderful movie, *Little Buddha*, starring Keanu Reeves. The movie tells the story of the Buddha in a very charming and entertaining way.

After leaving a small offering at each temple, my driver and I headed off to the Deer Park. At one point, we came to a little hill and as we went up it, I could see my driver was straining on the pedals. Without saying anything, I hopped out of the rickshaw and walked beside him up the hill. He smiled sheepishly at me, and I smiled back, saying "That's okay; it's kind of warm to be going uphill anyway."

At the Deer Park, I bought my driver a soft drink and then I went strolling around the beautiful park. Tame deer and peacocks walked among the trees, and at one place, I stopped and sat on the grass in the shade of a tree. Closing my eyes, I used the mantra I had learned a few years before in a Transcendental Meditation course. The energy at the Deer Park felt very good.

Later, I walked around inside the small museum and took a close look at the Lion Column. King Ashoka was

a famous convert to Buddhism and he ruled a vast Indian Empire in approximately 300 B.C. Of interest to me, I remembered that back in Afghanistan, at the Kabul Museum, there is an original stela, or stone pillar, from King Ashoka's time.

An Edict from King Ashoka

The stone pillar bears an inscription in three languages, much like the famous Rosetta Stone from Egypt. The writing is a message from King Ashoka in Sanskrit, Persian, and Aramaic. The language of Jesus, I remembered, was Aramaic. It was interesting to me that Aramaic was one of the three languages used, which would indicate that Aramaic was a language known to many ancient travelers.

The stone pillar was one of many border marking stones, placed at the boundaries of Ashoka's vast, ancient India Empire. The writing is basically a warning and welcome saying that the great King Ashoka will not tolerate evildoers, invading armies, or the like. And, that he expects visitors to be on their best behavior, or he may clobber them good. Or something to that effect. Perhaps, I thought, Jesus himself may have read and touched that very stone.

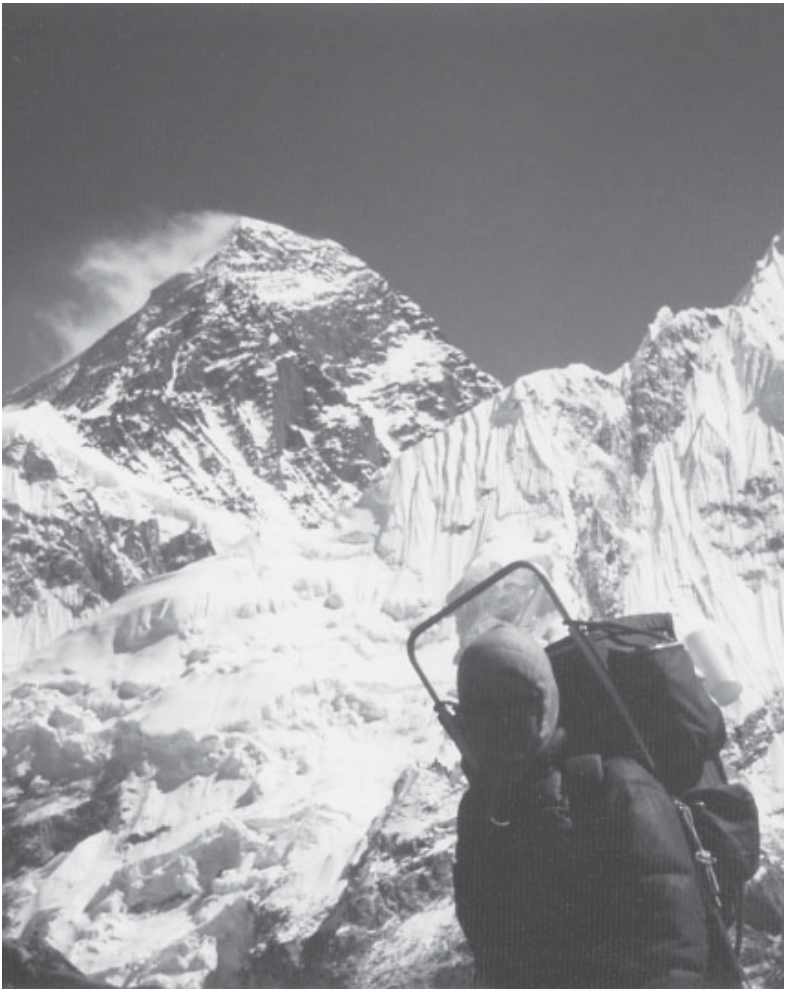
After leaving Sarnath, my rickshaw driver and I headed back to the hotel. I paid what we had agreed on, and gave him a good tip besides. I even gave him an extra shirt which I didn't need. He beamed a big smile, thanked me, and headed off to his family. I ate dinner at a nearby restaurant, and was then joined by a young Australian man from the hotel who produced a small bottle of whiskey. It was a brand from Thailand, which

he'd carried with him. We both had a small drink, talked some about Australia, women, and world travel. Then I left to turn in early.

My alarm woke me before dawn. I dressed and was soon on my way, walking to the shores of the nearby Ganges River, to a place where boats are for hire. I pressed my palms together and said, "Namaste" to a boatman who crushed out his cigarette, smiled, and returned the greeting. We made a deal and were soon on our way to watch the early morning cremations which take place at the burning ghats, beside the Ganges. The ashes are then pushed into the river. The human corpses are wrapped in brightly colored cloth, and workers place them atop stacks of wood. The boatman and I watched from the boat, a stone's throw away. It was a cloudy, somber morning.

Looking back at the experience, I remember that I went there that morning because I had read somewhere that the experience would be "unforgettable, and deeply moving." It was! Since then, I have not gone to see any other human cremations. Some activities of other cultures are perhaps best left alone. Incidentally, I was carrying my camera at that time and the boatman warned me to not attempt to take any pictures there. We would be in great danger of being killed, he said. I agreed with him.

Soon, I checked out of the hotel and was aboard a shiny, clean taxi going swiftly to the Varanasi Airport. The driver was playing Beatles music, which was fine with me. At the airport, a bearded, turbaned Sikh gentleman working in Customs smiled and stamped my passport, and I was soon aboard an Air India jet. The destination was Kathmandu!



The author standing atop Kala Pattar (18,200 feet)
with Nuptse, Lhotse, and Mt. Everest
(the dark, windswept mountain, 29,028 feet).

Chapter 8

To Kathmandu in the Kingdom of Nepal:
Walking 120 miles to Mt. Everest

And the wildest dreams of Kew are the facts of Kathmandu...

—Rudyard Kipling

Flying northward, the jet emerged from the monsoon cloudcover, and in front of us was the sweeping panorama of the Himalayas, the highest mountains on Earth. The seatbelt sign was turned off and many of us stood up and looked out the windows on both sides of the aircraft. It was a spectacular view! Toward the far right, I even thought I could pick out Mount Everest on the horizon. Coming up below us was

the great east-west valley where Kathmandu is located. It was a happy time.

At the Kathmandu airport, the unique, twin-banner red flag of Nepal fluttered in the breeze. The Kingdom of Nepal is a country about the size of Florida. After finding my backpack, I cleared Customs and was soon aboard a taxi, headed for a budget-priced place called The Valley View Hotel.

Riding in the taxi, I certainly got a favorable first impression of Nepal. There were not the teeming masses of filthy, negative-looking people that you see so often in towns and cities in India. I could see poor people in Nepal, yes, but somehow things did not look as crowded or wretched. There did not seem to be as much trash and debris, either. Also, I enjoyed the coolness of the high elevation air, the lush vegetation, and the spectacular view of the nearby Himalayas. Nepal is wonderful!

After checking into the Valley View Hotel, I was soon on my way for a late afternoon walking tour of Kathmandu. I went first to the Peace Corps office, which at that time was on Janpath Road. The Americans there were civil, but not very friendly. I explained that I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Afghanistan, and they kind of nodded okay and went back to their paperwork. I looked around at brochures a little while and then left. Somehow, I thought we might have a friendly conversation, they might offer some helpful advice, or something. Individual Peace Corps volunteers may be very helpful to visitors (I know I was!). But many Peace Corps staff people act like a horse's rear end. Just like United States government bureaucrats. Enough on that.

I shook the dust off my boots and stepped into a taxi headed for the Swayambu Buddhist Chorten. The sunset

The Gate of the Snow Lions, Kathmandu, Nepal

was beginning when I arrived and I joined some Buddhist pilgrims walking around the chorten. Many resident monkeys were playing under the nearby trees. Children were also playing near the monkeys as their parents walked and chanted. I saw several large metal dorje (lightning bolt) symbols around the chorten, and high above were painted the two large eyes of the vigilant Buddha.

Later, I went to eat dinner at a place called The Rose Garden Restaurant . There, I happened to meet three Peace Corps volunteers who were working in Nepal. We got into a lively conversation about the good and bad things about the Peace Corps. They asked about my impressions of Afghanistan and, in turn, I asked them their impressions of Nepal. They had a lot of good insights about the cultures and peoples. I explained that I would soon be going on the long walk to the base camp of

Mount Everest. It is also called the trek to the Solu-Khumbu region, a walk of about 120 miles, or so.

A Yeti Attack

They were excited to hear about that and gave me some good advice. Later, one of them pulled out that day's copy of the local English-language newspaper, The Daily Nepal, and pointed out a news story of perhaps five or six paragraphs. The piece was titled, "Sherpa Woman near Namche Bazaar, Attacked by Yeti." I knew that a Yeti is also called The Abominable Snowman, the gigantic, eight-foot tall, hair-covered wild man of the Himalayas. The American version, found mostly in the Pacific Northwest, is called Sasquatch by American Indians, or simply Bigfoot.

I took the newspaper and read the story with keen interest. After all, in two weeks or so, I was going to be there! I saw that the story, which appeared on the lower half of the front page was written as a straight news story. Very matter-of-factly. The story told how that a young Sherpa woman had been sent by her parents to watch the family's small herd of yaks as they grazed on a high mountain slope, not far from the village of Namche Bazaar. A heavy fog clung to the mountain slopes on that chilly, autumn morning. The yaks are large, powerful oxen with long coats of hair, adapted to live only in high mountains.

The young woman was alert, ready to scare off any bears or wolves which might try to bother the yaks. Suddenly, from behind, she heard a deep, menacing grunt, and turned to see a Yeti striding toward her. The Yeti was a large, powerfully-built male, which appeared to

be about eight feet tall, and was covered with long, brownish-red hair.

The young Sherpa woman was petrified with fear, unable to move or make a sound. The Yeti was intent on going to the yaks, and as it swiftly walked past her, the Yeti gave her a quick, backhanded blow with one of its arms. The hit had great force, knocking her unconscious and tossing her body 10 or 15 feet backwards, through the air. Some time later, she awakened on the ground, shook her head, and peered up to see the huge Yeti nearby, squatting over a large, dead yak. Apparently, the Yeti had killed the yak by grabbing its horns and twisting, breaking its powerful neck—a feat no human can do!

The Yeti was tearing off chunks of meat and eating with loud crunching and smacking sounds. The Sherpa woman watched discreetly and when the Yeti finished and stood up, she pretended to be dead. The giant Yeti scratched itself and ambled off into the trees of a nearby valley. The Sherpa woman ran quickly to her family and told what had happened. The authorities came quickly to investigate, and the news spread from there. Interestingly, as I write this, within the last several weeks on cable television's The History Channel, there was a program about the Himalayan Yeti, titled "In Search of History: Abominable Snowman." The show featured a Sherpa woman named Lhakpa Dolma who was attacked by a Yeti! Perhaps this was the same woman I read about? My trip was in 1974.

Of related interest about Yetis: a thoroughly fascinating true story is told in the book by Slavomir Rawicz, *The Long Walk*. In it, Polish-born Rawicz tells his amazing story of escaping from a Siberian prisoner-of-war

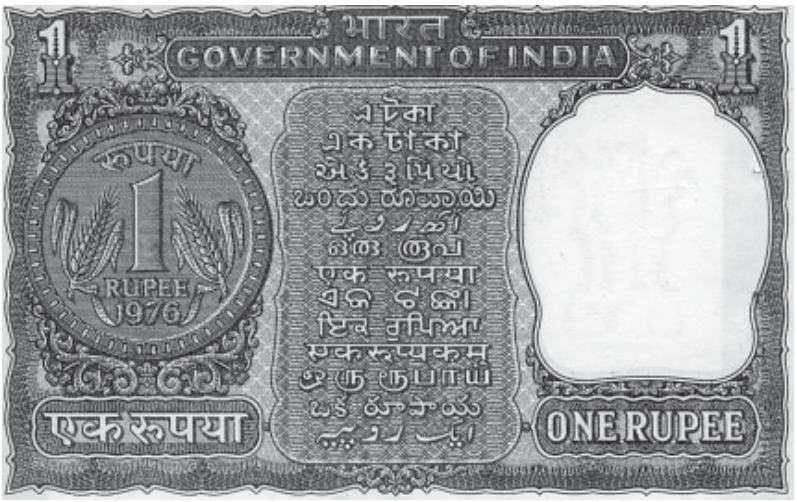
camp. During the latter part of World War Two, Rawicz and six other prisoners escaped and walked four thousand miles to freedom! They walked from north of Lake Baikal, across Siberia and Mongolia, western China, and Tibet. After about one year of walking and incredible hardships, they reached British-held India. On the final day, as they descended the last snowy slope of the Himalayas, they had a clear, daytime sighting of two Yetis below them!

Rawicz is now elderly and living in England.

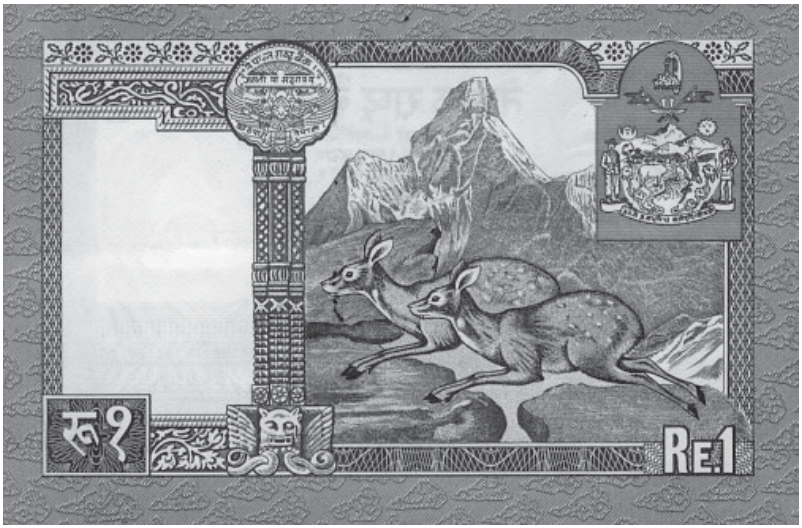
Preparing for a Trek in the Himalayas

The next morning, I went to The Ministry of Home Affairs in Kathmandu to apply for my Trekking Permit. Basically, it is a formality, and it was ready the following day. Two passport-type photos and a small fee is all that is needed. In the rare event that someone should disappear in the mountains, there would be some record of where they went. I picked up my permit the following day; the route I had indicated would include: Jiri, Lukla, Namche, Thangboche, Everest Base Camp. Object of Journey: Sight Seeing.

In a guide book, I had read that it is wise to get a large amount of small change for a mountain trek in Nepal. At that time, the advice was to get at least $50 (fifty dollars USA) changed into Nepalese one-rupee paper notes. Then the one-rupee notes were worth about 10 cents in American money. So I headed off in a three-wheeled scooter taxi to several banks, changing $10 or $20 at each bank. At the end, I had a stack of Nepalese money which seemed about five or six inches thick!



Indian one rupee note showing identification in some of India's major languages, including Hindi, English, Urdu, Bengali, Tamil, Gujerati, Marathi, Telegu, Bihari, Punjabi, Rajasthani, Kanarese, and Malayalam.



A Nepal one rupee note showing Mt. Ama Dablam.

I wrapped some big rubber bands around it, wrapped it in a big, red bandanna, and hid it in my backpack.

Next, I went to a knife bazaar and shopped around to find a good-quality Kukri, the traditional large, curved knife of Nepal. Many of the serious, adult men of Nepal carry a Kukri in their belt whenever they go on a journey in the mountains. I wasn't looking for trouble, but if something big and hairy knocked me down and started chewing on me, I was damned well going to defend myself. Also, just the sight of a Kukri in someone's belt who looks unafraid may prevent trouble with a potential thief. I had the knife sharpened and oiled, and put it in my pack, to carry later on my belt in the mountains. Also, I bought a sturdy hiking stick, as tall as my shoulder. That would be good for self-defense, also. Later, it may have saved my life.

Then I went to a variety of grocery stores and camping supply places. I stocked up on some basic supplies, including a large, resealable metal tin of peanut butter. My plan was to mostly eat meals of local food which can be bought along the trail at teahouses, cafes, and farmhouses. Instead of carrying a tent, I would arrange to sleep in a farmer's barn or at resthouses. And, I had been told I would be able to hire a good porter to help me carry half of my things, at the beginning of the trek at the villages called Lamosangu or Dholalghat.

At that time, the wage of 10 Nepalese Rupees a day, plus food, was considered a decent salary for a porter. At the exchange rate then, incredibly, that came to about one American dollar per day, plus food. At that time also, the average yearly cash income for a rural Nepalese farmer might only be from $35 to $50.

Also in Kathmandu, I stocked up more on Kodachrome and Ektachrome film for my 35mm Topcon Camera. Some of it was unused film, but still good, which trekkers or expeditions had sold before flying out of Kathmandu. Also, I had my well broken-in Vasque brand hiking boots, which were always comfortable, and my Eddie Bauer brand goose down KaraKoram minus 20 degree sleeping bag. I had used that bag a lot in Alaska, on hunting trips, and also when I climbed Mt. McKinley (Denali) only about a year and a half before. The McKinley climb was a 20-day trip. That bag had also been with me when I climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro in Tanzania.

A Basic Equipment List

That evening at my room at the Valley View Hotel, I assembled my things and packed my Kelty backpack. Besides my sleeping bag and hiking boots, I had a lightweight goose down jacket, spare shirts, pants, pyjamas, socks, bandanna, and underwear. Spare eyeglasses and sunglasses. Also, I had a toothbrush and toothpaste, comb, razor, soap, shampoo, rubber sandals (good to wear in some showers), and toilet paper (it is best to always carry some). Also a good-quality bath towel and a hand towel. My camera and film, wristwatch, pen and paper, walking stick, and Swiss Army knife. Next, a canteen, drinking mug, bowl, and spoon, fork, and knife kit. Also, my large Kukri knife, a small first aid kit, and a small flashlight with extra batteries and bulb. I also carried some water purification tablets (which, in my case, were not very effective). And, a deck of shaved playing cards from a magic store (for

The author's Kelty backpack which traveled with him twice around the world.

card tricks only; not gambling). Finally, I had a lightweight umbrella and a light rain poncho.

Even without a tent, freeze-dried food, a cookstove, binoculars, pots and pans, or some other things, my backpack still felt pretty heavy. I put anything non-essential into a duffel bag and carried it to the hotel's front desk, where I arranged to leave it in a storage room until I returned. It is one thing to carry a backpack a short distance at an airport or train station, and it is a different thing to carry it on a mountain climb or a long walk in the mountains. I have done plenty of both. My pack still felt quite a bit too heavy (to carry for 120 miles or more), but I consoled myself with the thought that I would divide the weight with my porter. I wrote a letter home, sipped a little vodka, and went to sleep.

Early the next morning after breakfast, I was riding in a local bus, the only Westerner among a group of Nepalese villagers, headed eastward about 40 miles, or so, to village of Lamosangu, the beginning point for the 120 mile walk to Everest Base Camp. A few villagers aboard the bus spoke a little broken English; also, I could speak some simple, basic Hindi language which I had learned from a tutor in Afghanistan. Many

Nepalese I met spoke some Hindi. I never was a big smoker, but to be sociable, I was carrying two or three packs of Camel Filter cigarettes. As the curious villagers asked me questions, I passed out cigarettes to the nearby adults who wanted them.

Chomolongma: Goddess Mother of the World

For the Nepalese, American cigarettes were a novelty, and we were all smiling and puffing away. Like Clinton, I wasn't inhaling. The Nepalese asked me where I was going and when I told them, "Chomolongma" ("Goddess Mother of the World," the Tibetan name for Everest) their eyes became big. Some asked with hand gestures if I was going to the top? No, I indicated, just to the base. One man asked in Hindi, "*Aap Sagar Matha jaaega?*" "Are you going to Everest?" I told him yes, I was going to Everest. Another man said, "*Khumbu Himal?*" indicating the Khumbu Glacier which flows from Everest. "Yes," I told them. American? Yes. Alone? Yes.

Everyone puffed silently for a while, deep in thought. None of these villagers, it turned out, had ever walked that far eastward, all the way to the Everest region. They had heard countless stories about the area from Sherpas, porters, and other travelers: fantastic ice peaks, avalanches, rushing rivers of milk-white water, strange tribes and animals, and of course, the Yeti. They looked at me with mixed emotions, as if they thought I was either very brave or very foolish.

We talked some more and the villagers all recommended that I begin the trek from Dholalghat, rather

The author en route to Everest Base Camp, near the Khumbu Glacier.

than Lamosangu. They said I would have a better chance of finding a good porter there. I took their advice and stayed on the bus for the short distance. The trail from both starting points converges after about one day's walk. From there, it is basically a single, dirt footpath all the way to Mt. Everest. At the time I walked it, there was not even one signpost or marker of any kind on the entire route!

Beginning the Trek

At Dholalghat, I retrieved my pack from the top of the bus, strapped my Kukri onto my belt, took my walking staff in hand, and was ready! I said farewell to the villagers, and gave each another cigarette. They smiled and nodded goodbye, pointing to the trail I should take. I thanked them and headed off. Right away, the trail went gradually up a hillside. The weather there was fairly warm and sunny that day, and my pack felt

uncomfortably heavy. As I had planned, I began asking local men who were walking in the same direction if they would like to work as a porter?

That was the advice I was told by several people in Kathmandu: "Oh yes, you can just hire a porter as you go along the trail." In retrospect, I might have waited in the village, sent out verbal enquiries, and interviewed several prospective ones before choosing. But, as it was, things worked out perfectly.

Within 10 minutes of walking, a sturdy gentleman in early middle age, approached from behind with an empty basket-type pack. He smiled and gave the "Namaste" greeting. He didn't speak any English, and I didn't speak any Nepali, but we both could speak some simple Hindi—at least a few dozen words, perhaps a couple of hundred words. Along with hand gestures, we did a pretty good job of communicating. We didn't talk any philosophy, but we got the important ideas across.

His name was Singhbhavadhur. He was a farmer who sometimes worked as a porter, carrying loads for hire. His home was near a small village called Jiri and he lived with his family there. He had just delivered a backpack load for a merchant and was walking back home. His traditional bamboo-basket type of Nepalese backpack was almost empty. The terms I offered sounded good to him: 10 rupees a day and I would pay for his food. We smiled and shook hands. Later, I had to explain that food did not include rice liquor and tobacco. He could buy those himself. We divided things from my pack and set off at a merry pace.

The path from there to the Everest region runs basically east and west; the dozens of river valleys run north and south from the Himalayas in the North. Thus, for

most of the trek, you are walking into and out of river valleys. The farther you continue, the more spectacular the scenery. There are all sorts of bridges for the foot traffic across the many streams and rivers. A few, like the bridge across the Dudh Kosi River, which you may reach on the 10th or 12th day of walking, are modern and sturdy. Sir Edmund Hillary was the main force behind the building of the Dudh Kosi Bridge.

But many of the bridges on the trek are primitive, even dangerous. Some are not much more than a log about the size of a telephone pole, spanning a torrent of white water. I'm glad I went on the trek, and the advice I would give about bridges is to go slowly and take your time.

My porter, Singhbhavadhur, near the Dudh Kosi River, Nepal.

Singhbhavadhur and I each carried our own umbrella during the trek. There can always be a sudden, unexpected rain shower as clouds sweep into the valleys, and an umbrella is a kind of quick, mini-tent. You can pop it open and squat under it to wait out a short downpour. Or you might have the umbrella covering your head and pack as you walk for hours in a drizzling, misting rain.

Another umbrella use is to occasionally fend off leeches,

which in some forested areas will drop from the branches above when humans or animals walk under them. It is a lot more fun to have leeches bounce off an umbrella, than to have them on your skin. If a leech does get on your skin, using a cigarette lighter or putting some salt on it will usually get it to release.

The first day of walking, we stopped about sunset at a farmhouse and negotiated to buy dinner and to sleep in the hay barn. We had a typical meal of rice, lentils, a few vegetables, and some tea with milk and sugar. Later, in the Dudh Kosi river valley, closer to Everest, we were able to buy baked potatoes with butter and salt. That was a welcome change! Also, sometimes we found places which baked a kind of local flat bread which was good with the peanut butter I carried. Some people in Nepal, India, and so on, get freaked out by peanut butter! They can't imagine what kind of food it is.

The trek settled into a regular routine. Every morning, we would get up in the twilight, before the sun came over the mountains. We would get dressed, roll up our sleeping bags, and pack. Then a hot cup of tea from a farm kitchen, a piece of bread and fruit, paying for the breakfast, and back onto the trail, walking. We walked basically all day long, every day, from before sunrise until after sunset. We took rest stops whenever either of us needed to, and we stopped sometimes for a tea break, or to eat lunch. I thoroughly enjoyed the scenery, and took a lot of pictures.

Some Close Calls

After a few days of walking, we thought one evening that we might camp out instead of staying in a hay loft.

It was close to sunset, and we were in one of what seemed like an endless number of valleys on the trek eastward. But this narrow valley was particularly beautiful and below the footbridge, near the stream, was a broad, sandy area. It looked perfect for camping, and no one else was in the area.

The sky there was clear and starry; we spread out our bedrolls and put up a makeshift tarp as a canopy. After cooking dinner on a fire made from driftwood, we were about to get ready for bed. Then a Sherpa woman came on a trail from the north and crossed the footbridge. She spoke excitedly with my porter, and gestured repeatedly northward, to the mountains. Then she walked westward on the main trail, toward higher ground.

Using the only language we both understood, Hindi, Singhbhavadhur explained, pointing to the high mountains to the north, "*Bahot, bahot paani vaarhsta!*" Meaning, "Lots and lots of rain has fallen!," indicating in the high mountains. "*Enja bahot khaternock hay!*" Meaning "Here it is very dangerous!" I looked at the clear, starry sky above and also I looked to the far north where thick clouds and fog covered the distant mountains. Reluctantly, I agreed. If the Sherpa woman had not come by, I would have been sound asleep in a few minutes.

We moved camp quickly, carrying things up and crossing the footbridge to the east side. Among the bushes and trees, perhaps 15 or 20 feet higher than the bridge, we set up our new camp. The mosquitoes were plentiful there, and I went to sleep thinking wistfully about how pleasant it had been in the other location.

A persistent, roaring sound gradually woke me from a deep sleep. It was perhaps 1 or 2 A.M. There was a bright moon, illuminating the bushy hillside well. It

seemed surreal; the sound was like a rushing train nearby. But there are no trains in Nepal! Completely baffled, I put on my glasses, stood up, and began to walk around barefoot. Then I looked toward the footbridge. The entire floor of the narrow ravine was a raging torrent of churning, white water! The water was only a few inches away from touching the wooden floorboards of the bridge! Our former campsite was under perhaps 10 feet, or more, of raging water. If we had been asleep there, the wall of water would have smashed us against the huge boulders downstream. My porter and I just stared and were silent.

The following day, I began to feel very nauseous. Anything I drank or ate, before long I vomited up. The convulsions were sometimes like dry heaves. I had a terrible headache, also, and what felt like a high fever. My porter and I had been sometimes drinking water directly from the clear, mountain streams. The water looked wonderful and it was icy cold, but, amoebae or some other contaminant must have been in the water somewhere. Soon, I had a severe case of amoebic dysentary. I took some basic medicines which I carried in my first aid kit. But nothing I had seemed to assuage my suffering.

For three days of walking, the illness continued. I kept vomiting up anything and everything: water, hot tea, milk, food. Anything I swallowed, I soon had to vomit up. I could barely walk anymore. My porter became very worried and told me he had seen people die in my condition. I agreed with him and asked what could be done? We were in a very remote, isolated area, with no hospitals or doctors. Or telephones. I began to wonder if I would die there?

A Tibetan Healer Saves My Life

About then, some villagers approached and asked about my condition. I was lying on the ground, beside the trail, pale and obviously sick. They felt my feverish brow, and told my porter about a nearby Tibetan man who is a healer. They said he is a specialist in traditional, Tibetan-type folk medicine, and he is a skilled healer. They said he lives perhaps about two miles north of the main trail, in a forest, near a tiny village called Thodung. They also said that at Thodung there is a small cheese factory, built by the Swiss, which makes yak milk into cheese.

It was nearing sunset, and my porter and I both felt it was an emergency that I must get medical help immediately. I was in bad shape and getting worse! We set off on the trail uphill to the north, to Thodung. I had

Sherpas on the Khumbu Glacier, Nepal, approaching Everest Base Camp.

become very dizzy and even more nauseous; I hobbled along, but often stumbled and fell down. Although Singhbhavadhur is a small man, he valiantly tried to help me walk by putting my arm over his shoulders. Soon, darkness fell as we struggled uphill through a forest of pine trees. We had seen no one else on the trail. I could barely stand up. Even sitting on the ground, I felt I was about to pass out.

My porter advised me to stay there and rest. He said he would go ahead, find the Tibetan doctor, and return with help. I agreed and gave him the flashlight from my pack. He grimly took it and set off. I sat alone in the gathering darkness, on the ground. My head was throbbing and spinning with fever and I was very nauseous. I laid on the ground and didn't think to look at my watch. By now, night had fallen and the forest was completely dark. I went unconscious.

I woke up and did not know if it was minutes later, or several hours later. A heavy fog filled the dark forest, and the moonlight filtered down, giving an eerie effect. For a startled moment, I wondered if I was already dead? No, not yet. Then for the first time, I seriously considered the possibility of dying there. I prayed and came to peace with the situation, whatever the outcome. Could my porter be lost?

Finally, in the distance, I could hear a voice yelling, "Sahib! Sahib!" I yelled back, hoarsely, and kept yelling. After a few minutes, I was thrilled to see Singhbhavadhur and the Tibetan doctor, approaching through the fog. The Tibetan man looked very robust and healthy, perhaps in his 30's, wearing blue jeans and a plaid shirt. Somehow, his wholesome look reminded me of a Tibetan version of John Denver. They got on

either side of me and took my arms over their shoulders. I tried to stand and walk.

After 10 or 15 minutes on the trail, we turned off and came to a log cabin type of house with candles and kerosene lamps in the windows. A cheerful fire burned in the fireplace, and numerous children looked out the windows. This was the Tibetan doctor's home. They parked me outside briefly on a wooden bench, while they dashed inside for something. I suddenly had to vomit. Standing, I took a few steps, lost my balance, and fell on the ground. The doctor cleaned me off with a towel and gave me a small cup of a warm liquid to drink right away.

They helped me walk inside the house and sit down for a checkover. Then the doctor gave me pills and more warm liquids, including warm yak milk. Next, I was escorted to a nearby building with several small rooms and helped into a bed. The doctor spoke a little English and told me to sleep. I did so right away.

Mt. Gauri Shankar

In the morning, my headache was mostly gone, and although still weak, I felt much better. The sky had cleared also, and when I opened the door to look outside, I saw Gauri Shankar, a magnificent Himalayan peak just nearby in the north. Right then, the Tibetan doctor's wife appeared with a tray of breakfast and steaming hot tea. Soon, the doctor came with a cup of warm liquid medicine and some pills. He examined me and said I would be well enough to travel after two or three days. Also, he remarked that without medical treatment, I probably would have died in one day or so.

Mt. Gauri Shankar as seen from Thodung, Nepal, on the trail to Everest Base Camp.

I agreed heartily with him. He told me that he had seen young foreigners die before from diseases or accidents on the trail to Everest. He said I was lucky.

That afternoon, the doctor brought more medicine and said that if I felt like walking a short distance, just nearby was a Tibetan Buddhist Temple. He said the monks would be chanting and having a ceremony. He told me I would be welcome to visit, and I could ask a blessing for the remainder of my journey. My porter said he wanted to go also, and the doctor gave us each a white scarf to present to the chief monk. The doctor showed us the trail and we headed off through the pine forest.

A cool fog swept in from the north as we walked. It felt great to not be carrying a backpack! We soon came to the Tibetan building where the monks seemed to be expecting us. Inside, the monks sat in rows on the wooden

floors, chanting and beating drums. A sweet-smelling incense filled the air, and the chief monk sat on a slightly raised platform. No other Westerners were there. My porter gave me the cue to come with him and present the white scarves. In return, the chief monk gave a white scarf to both of us and said a blessing for our journey. We thanked him and left. I was moved by the experience.

During the next day of recuperation, I had asked the doctor about the Swiss-built yak cheese factory at Thodung. He arranged for my porter and me to visit. That afternoon, again in the cool fog, we walked a few minutes and were at the factory. It was small, the size of a medium-house, and looked pretty clean. The most memorable thing for me were several huge, reddish-orange colored metal bowls. They looked like hand-beaten copper and were about four feet in diameter. They were inset into the tables. Large containers of fresh yak milk were poured into the bowls. We tried the yak cheese and it was very tasty!

After three days of healing and rest, the doctor told me I could continue my journey. That morning I paid the balance to the doctor and thanked him for saving my life. My porter and I packed our things and set off again on the trail going eastward. For the rest of the trip, the doctor advised me to only drink water which had been boiled for at least 20 minutes. I followed his advice.

A few days later, another unforgettable event happened. My porter and I had stopped to drink tea one afternoon in a small village along the trail. We were in a drab-looking wooden teahouse with a few local customers. Although I'm normally very careful, I was tired and accidentally dropped my five-inch thick bundle of one-rupee notes as I reached into my backpack. The red

bandanna around the bundle came completely off, and the huge wad of money, held together by several thick, rubber bands, lay at my feet on the floor.

In American money, it was only about $50 cash, but in rural Nepal, where small farmers might have about $35 cash income a year, it was a staggering amount! One man dropped his fork! I looked around, and the few people in the room were all staring, with their mouths open! Quickly, I picked up the bundle, wrapped my bandanna around it, and put it back in my pack. My porter and I swallowed our tea down, I paid from my wallet, and we left.

Looking back over our shoulders, we saw three menacing-looking men in dirty clothes, staring at us from the doorway. Shortly after, my porter whispered to me that the "three bad men" will follow us and try to kill us to steal the money. In that remote area, there were no police, no telephones. We both had the same idea: it was nearly sunset, we walked very fast and used a leafy branch to obscure our tracks. Then at a place where no one was in sight in either direction, we jumped off the trail into one of the countless, brushy ravines downhill from the trail.

We hid in the brush and trees, and watched as three men with a kerosene lantern clumsily looked for tracks. We stayed in the ravine that night, had no further trouble, and resumed our walk the next morning.

A River of Milk

On about the 10th day of walking, we came to the famous "Dudh Kosi," or, "River of Milk." The name of the river comes from the fact that glaciers feed the river,

and the glacial water carries large amounts of pulverized stone. There is so much white-colored powdered stone in the water that it looks like milk! The sturdy, metal and wood footbridge across the Dudh Kosi was sponsored by Sir Edmund Hillary, the first conqueror of Mt. Everest. After crossing the bridge, the trail turns basically due north and the scenery starts to become fantastic!

Some sections of the trail were like stone steps which descended or ascended for what seemed like incredible distances. Sometimes there were beautiful waterfalls near the trail or just across the valley, which is narrow in places. We began seeing yaks, the huge, shaggy high-altitude oxen for the first time. Also, we were seeing many more Sherpa porters on the trail, both coming and going. They were usually cheerful and smiling. The trek was becoming more and more interesting as we got closer to Everest.

Trekkers approaching the Khumbu Glacier en route to Everest Base Camp. White mountain in center is Pumo Ri.

We passed below the Lukla airstrip, which is situated on the slopes of the eastern side of the valley. Many expeditions and visitors fly into the Lukla airstrip and begin from there. From Lukla, it is only a few hours walk into the big village of Namche Bazaar, and perhaps two days of further walking to Everest Base Camp. My plan was to fly out of Lukla after going to Everest Base Camp. The flights from Lukla go directly to Kathmandu.

Soon after passing near Lukla, my porter and I began meeting Sherpas who said they had just come from Namche Bazaar. That was about the 12th day of walking. Excitedly, we picked up our pace! Namche has hotels, of sorts, with hot showers. Also, we had heard that beer is available, among other such things as Coca Cola, ice cream, candy bars, and so forth. My porter and I were having a friendly walking contest!

A dense, cool fog crept down from the mountain heights as we walked uphill for the last stretch into Namche. Several times, large yaks with long, reddish-brown fur were led past by their owners. Finally, we crossed a high footbridge and realized we had arrived at Namche, in the heavy fog. After so many days of walking in remote country, it felt like we had arrived in New York City!

The International Footrest

Right away we located a place to stay which I had heard about, called "The International Footrest." It is a hotel, sort of, which has only one big room, instead of private rooms. The big room has wide, wooden stair-step type levels which ascend upwards from the center

of the room. In the center of the room is a circular fireplace with a funnel-like copper chimney going straight up into the ceiling. At the level of the highest wooden ledges, there are windows on three sides of the big room. Guests simply unroll their sleeping bag and foam pad and sleep on one of the giant wooden steps. The story was that a visiting French mountain climber who is an architect designed the room. Across a hallway is a kitchen where people can buy food and there are bathrooms with showers.

After a hot shower, I was ready to walk around a little in the fog. I left my porter at the hotel, talking with a pretty Sherpa girl who worked in the kitchen. It was novel to be in a village of a few hundred people and not see any cars. Simply because, there are no roads or highways leading into Namche Bazaar. Also, at that time, I didn't see any bicycles, televisions, or telephones! And, at night, there were no electric lights, only kerosene or gas lanterns, or candles. All in all, the people I met seemed happy with their slow-paced, simple way of life. I found a store where I bought a couple of bottles of beer and took them to the hotel.

I awoke at sunrise the next morning and saw through the windows that the sky was now brilliantly clear and sunny. I rolled over in my sleeping bag, where I was sleeping on the top wooden ledge, beside a window. As I looked out the window, I gasped with amazement at the dramatic mountain scenery! Some of the spectacular peaks I saw from the window are called the Kwangde Peaks.

After breakfast, my porter Singhbhavadhur told me he was homesick to return to his village of Jiri. I

understood completely and paid him his money: a crisp 100 Rupee note and two 10 Rupee notes. He widened his eyes at the sight of so much cash money, thanked me, folded the money carefully, and put it into a pouch under his shirt. Then we walked to a nearby shop where I bought him tennis shoes and a pair of socks as a bonus. He smiled, thanked me, and placed his palms together in farewell. Then he handed me his own walking stick as a gift, and he was gone.

To Thangboche Monastery and Ama Dablam

Before continuing my trek, I decided to take my camera and look around Namche Bazaar a little, especially since the bright sunlight would be so good for taking pictures. Specifically, I wanted to visit a nearby place called The Everest View Hotel. So I walked just uphill from Namche passing a place called the Shyangboche air strip. Some of the visitors to The Everest View Hotel take a flight from Kathmandu to the Shyangboche air strip and depart the same way. The airstrip is at around 14,000 feet elevation. At the time I was there, the story was that only one pilot in Nepal was willing to fly into that airstrip.

I took the trail toward the hotel and coming around a bend, I was attacked by a large dog. The dog was a German Shepherd type and was with a Sherpa woman. She called to stop the dog, but had no leash or collar. The dog ignored her, and was charging at me full tilt, with its fangs bared. Just to my right was an almost sheer drop-off to the huge rocks in the river, far below. I could

easily visualize myself going over the edge, with the vicious dog attached to some tender part of my anatomy! To protect myself, I used my walking stick as a club, and hit the dog very soundly on top of the head as it flew toward me. That stopped the attack. The dog responded then to the Sherpa woman, and they both walked past me. I love dogs, but I had been walking many days and was feeling strong and self-reliant, and I was not in the mood to take any crap!

Next, I heard a galloping horse approaching from the direction of the hotel! To my amazement, an Oriental man dressed like a Mongolian tribesman appeared suddenly, riding a white horse! They stopped a few feet away and looked at me. Who could this be? I thought. And does he speak English? I put my palms together in front of my chest and said the "Namaste" greeting. He smiled, did the same, and then said in perfect English, "Where are you going?" I told him I was going to visit The Everest View Hotel. He replied that he is the manager of the hotel, and he is from Japan. He waved and rode off.

I soon came to the Hotel and was favorably impressed with how it looks. Contrary to some of the publicity I had heard, the Everest View Hotel is a modest and tastefully designed building. It was built by a Japanese company and is located high up on the western flank of the Dudh Kosi River Valley. The building is made of beautiful, white stones; it is a one-story building with only 10 guest rooms. Each room has a clear view of Mt. Everest. From that angle, the summit of Everest is jutting above the Nuptse-Lhotse Wall, several miles away to the north of the hotel.

I admired the tasteful landscaping around the hotel, also. There are beautiful shrubs, trees, and lawns which give a Zen-like serenity to the setting. Also, from the hotel there is a spectacular view across the valley eastward to a mountain called Ama Dablam and the majestic Thangboche Monastery below it. "*Ama Dablam*" means "Mother's Jewel Box," the name comes from a huge, blue ice cornice which juts outward just below the spire-like summit of the mountain. Some people consider Ama Dablam to be the most beautiful mountain in the world. I would give it my vote, also.

I went inside the Everest View Hotel and ordered a cup of hot tea. Sitting in the restaurant area, I relaxed and just soaked in the gorgeous mountain scenery, including Everest. The lofty, spectacular setting reminded me of Valhalla. I think I was the only young do-it-yourself trekker right then visiting in the hotel. I think I looked tan, trim, and very outdoorsy. The other guests looked like they had flown into the nearby airstrip and would fly out, also. That was fine with me; why can't everyone enjoy seeing the mountains? Also, I was told there is an oxygen tank in every guest room, in case anyone needs to breathe some pure oxygen.

It was still only mid-morning, so I walked back to Namche Bazaar, checked out of The International Footrest, and shouldered my Kelty Pack. My load was much lighter now, than at the beginning of the trek. And somehow, I felt exhilarated to know that in several days I would reach Everest Base Camp, and along the way would be awesome scenery. And not many days after that, I would be flying out of the Lukla airstrip and returning to the comforts of Kathmandu. Life can be good!

It was early November, and the weather that day was still sunny, cool, and pleasant. That stretch of the trail is marvelous scenery, going toward Thangboche Monastery. I walked steadily, savoring it all, and taking plenty of pictures. Later, when I almost reached the Monastery, cool clouds of dense fog began sweeping in from the north. A cold, whipping rain, began falling, with strong gusts of wind. I quickly placed some devotional objects which Singhbhavadhur asked me to do, at the Monastery's chorten. One of the objects was a small, metal trident of Shiva.

Inside the Monastery, a monk cheerfully brought me a mug of hot tea, and I sat resting on the wooden floors. Soon, a group of Mountain Travel trekkers arrived, not in the most cheerful spirits, and took shelter from the rain. Outside, their porters set up their tents, and prepared camp for the evening. I negotiated with the monks to buy a meal and stay in a guest room.

The next morning I left Thangboche Monastery and continued on the trail. Later I crossed another bridge across the Dudh Kosi, and soon I saw the glacial moraines of the Khumbu Glacier. The Khumbu is the glacier on which Everest Base Camp is located. Sometimes, I stopped at some Sherpa's stone hut which had a Cafe sign, to buy a cup of tea. Amazingly, they often build a fire on the dirt floor with no chimney! This fills the entire hut with very dense smoke. The people lie on the floor, finding clearer air within a few inches of the ground. I tried it, but preferred staying outside.

I camped in a borrowed canvas tent near a stone hut beside the Khumbu glacier. The altitude was probably 16,000 feet or higher. I had slept that high before, in an

ice cave at 17,200 feet, when I climbed Mt. McKinley (Denali, 20,320 feet) in Alaska. But it was no picnic. And, climbing Kilimanjaro (19,340 feet) was also a high altitude ascent. Still, it was a fitful, restless night's sleep in the thin, icy air.

To Everest Base Camp and Lukla Airstrip

The next morning I got started at daylight. The sky was clear and at that elevation, a very dark blue, almost a purplish color. The trail clung to the left side of the glacier, winding among huge, rounded boulders. Scattered Sherpas and yaks were carrying supplies for a Polish expedition climbing Lhotse. I was also told that an expedition from Spain had just climbed Everest, and I found a freshly carved tombstone for one of the climbers. The name Dinode Riso was carved into one of the large, white boulders, along with a Christian cross.

After several more hours, I reached a small, turquoise-colored lake at a place called Gorak Shep. A short distance farther, and I reached Everest Base Camp. The Polish Expedition had their tents set up there. I soon walked back to Gorak Shep and the small lake which some people call the Yak Lake. Immediately beside the Yak Lake, to the west, is a small mountain called Kala Pattar, meaning Black Rock. The summit is at about 18,200 feet. The base near the Yak Lake is at about 17,000 feet. It is shaped like a black cinder cone. Many of the famous, classic photographs of Everest are taken from the summit of Kala Pattar. That's where I went.

Ray Genet holds Marlene Titus in a playful moment on Mt. McKinley, Alaska. Genet's body now rests eternally at 28,000 feet on Mt. Everest.

It was a fairly easy walk-up to the top of Kala Pattar. The view of Everest and the surrounding peaks is stupendous! Just incredible and fabulously beautiful! With the self-timer on my Topcon 35mm camera, I took

photos of myself with Everest in the background. I stayed up there about one hour, just enjoying the tremendous view and the perfect, sunny clear weather. An amazing place!

A couple of days later, I camped for the night at the Lukla airstrip, high on the eastern slope of the Dudh Kosi valley. The next morning was sunny, calm, and cool. Green grass still carpeted the airstrip, but the promise of approaching winter was in the air. It was almost the middle of November. At one of the wooden huts at Lukla, I bought a ticket for the flight to Kathmandu. There were a handful of other passengers, mostly trekkers, and some Nepalese people.

A Hasty Take-Off from Lukla

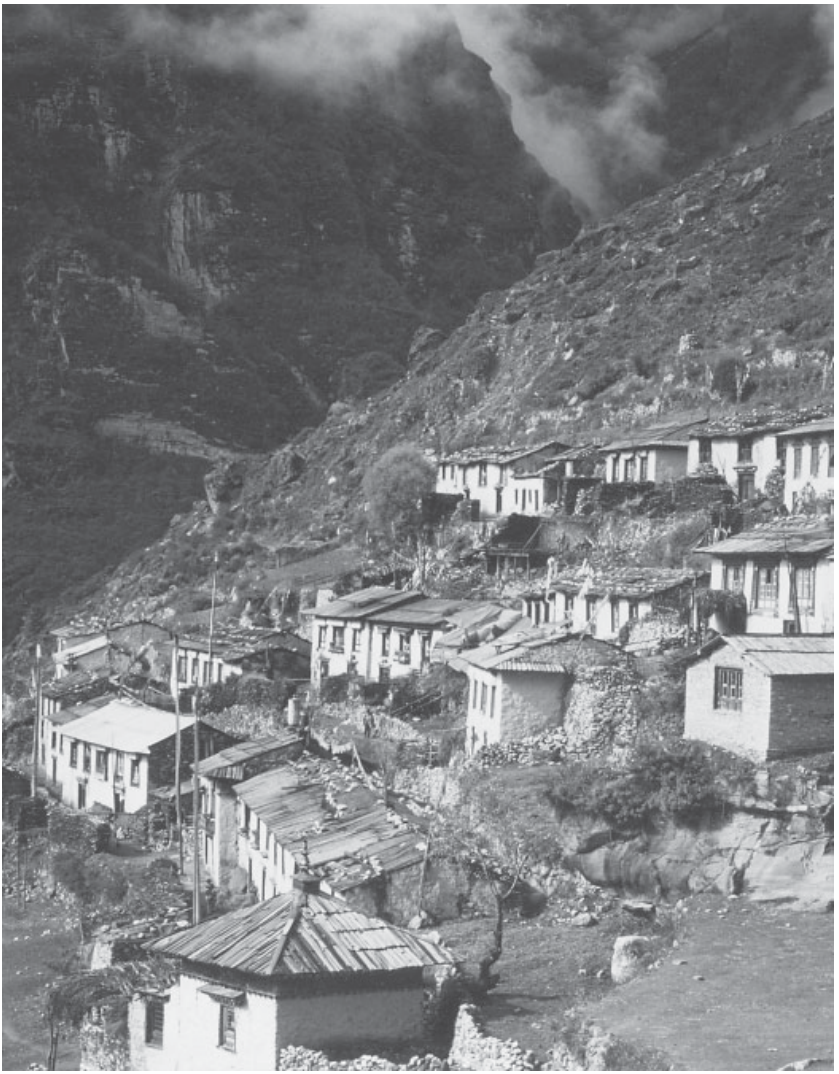
When I enquired, I was told that the aircraft is a Pilatus Porter; I remembered seeing some of them in Alaska. They are known for short take-offs and landings; they have a distinctive tail which points straight up. As we sat waiting for the plane to arrive, I rummaged through my pack, looking for things I didn't really need. Some local children were waiting politely nearby. I took out my large tin of peanut butter, which was still half-full. One of the children expressed interest, and I gave it to him. He smiled, and I gave granola bars to the other children. They giggled.

Suddenly, we heard a roaring sound and turned to look down the sloping, grassy airstrip. The Pilatus Porter was flying up from the valley. Some clouds were already sweeping into the valley from the mountains to the north. Many of the children from other huts were

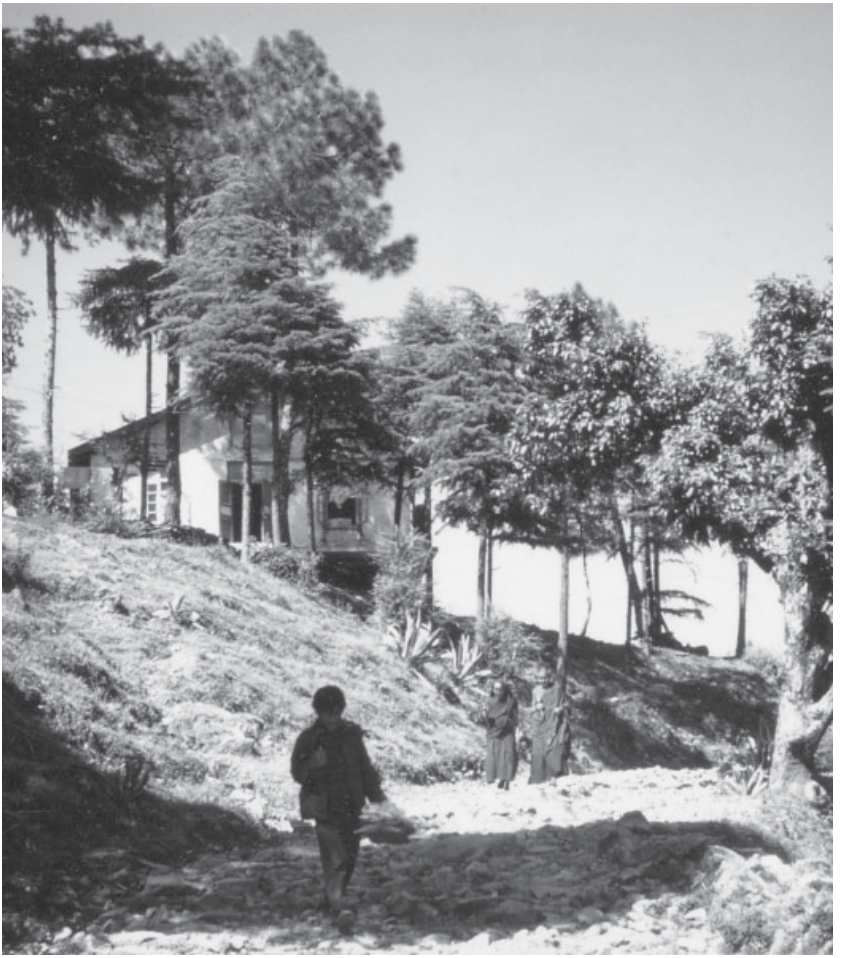
racing out to chase grazing yaks from the grassy airstrip. The plane came up the slope swiftly, pivoted, and stopped smartly. The engines were throttled back, but left running. Doors were quickly opened, and passengers and cargo rapidly came out. Several passengers, including myself, swiftly loaded aboard, the two pilots readied the controls, the one stewardess checked our seatbelts, and we began takeoff. Some clouds were already approaching the bottom of the runway.

Barreling down the grassy slope at breakneck speed, we gasped as we watched several huge, shaggy yaks scramble out of the plane's path. The children chasing them scattered, also, and coming up swiftly was the sheer drop-off at the end of the strip. The cliff dropped all the way down to the river, far below. The clouds also, can come in and cover the airstrip at any time, making take-off impossible. A short distance before reaching the drop-off, the aircraft lifted powerfully into the air and soared into the valley. Soon, we rose high above the clouds, and headed westward toward Kathmandu. The great ice peaks of the Himalayas pierced the cloud cover, like glistening jewels, and made the view incredible! We took pictures and marveled at what we saw.

That was the most interesting airplane take-off I have ever been on! The view on the way back of the Himalayan peaks was unforgettable. Before many days, I would be back in India, learning more about Jesus' lost years.



Namche Bazaar, Nepal



Chapter 9

Traditions about the Teenage Years of Jesus:
Puri, Cuttack, and the Jagganath Temple

All great ideas begin as heresies.
—George Bernard Shaw

After arriving safely back at Kathmandu, Nepal, I recovered my strength for a few days. For a while, it seemed like I was constantly hungry, even eating five or six times a day. One unusual place I remember going was called Vishnu's Pie and Chai Palace. It was one of

several places in Kathmandu which specializes in selling slices of pies or cakes, served with hot tea or coffee. In a few days, I felt well again and began my return trip back to Afghanistan, first taking a flight back to Varanasi, India.

At Varanasi, also called by the ancient name, Benares, I met with several Hindu scholars and a Buddhist priest. We discussed the traditions and folklore, both written and carried on by the spoken word, that Jesus as a teenager had lived in India. Interestingly, many of the traditions we discussed were focused on the eastern India state of Orissa. Two locations which are frequently mentioned are the cities of Puri and Cuttack. Interestingly also, the same locations are noted in Levi Dowling's classic book concerning Jesus in India called *The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*. Dowling was a Civil War chaplain in the Union Army who obtained information from the Akashic Records to write his book.

Some traditions state, like Dowling's book, that a Prince from the eastern India state of Orissa, traveled numerous times with his entourage to visit ancient Judea, and such a Prince became the sponsor of young Jesus. Other traditions, such as those of the Nath Yogis, state that Jesus ran away from home at the age of 13 and joined a caravan of merchants going to India. He reportedly was 14 years old when he arrived in the land of the Five Rivers (Punjab) in northern Sindh. He then went to the Jagganath Temple in Orissa, where he was a student for six years. According to the legend: "He spent six years in Jagannath, Rajagriha, Benares, and other holy cities."

At the Feast of the Passover

The *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ* states that during the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus (Jmmanuel) was 12 years old, Prince Ravanna and his entourage were in Jerusalem. When Mary and Joseph missed their son and began looking for him, to their amazement, they found him in a learned conversation with the Jewish High Priests. One of these priests may have been the famous scholar, Rabbi Hillel. Young Jesus was making remarkably wise and insightful answers to the Jewish priests' most difficult questions about spiritual matters. Prince Ravanna was watching and listening, also.

Prince Ravanna was greatly impressed with young Jesus, and discussed the subject with his royal advisers. Thereafter, Ravanna and his entourage made the journey to Nazareth to meet Joseph, Mary, young Jesus, and the rest of the family. The proposal which Ravanna made to Joseph and Mary was to become the patron, or sponsor, for young Jesus to travel with his group and become a visiting scholar in India. Jesus was very enthusiastic about the offer and after some days of consideration, Joseph and Mary finally gave their consent.

The royal entourage went by camel caravan to return overland to India. In India, Jesus was accepted as a student at the Jagannath Temple, where he studied the Vedas and the teachings of the Hindu religion. According to the traditions, most of Jesus' teenage years were spent at Cuttack, Puri, and Benares. At Benares, Jesus studied the Hindu art of healing.

The traditions state that Jesus believed in and taught the concept of reincarnation, but not that of transmigration. That is, that human souls incarnate again and again

into human bodies, but not into the bodies of animals. Also, Jesus often spoke against the caste system, proclaiming that human equality should be practiced instead. Several times, angry mobs tried to hurt Jesus, but he was always able to escape.

Folklore says that sometime during the teenage years of Jesus, he was notified that his surrogate father, Joseph had died. This notification was by a letter from his mother, Mary, which Jesus replied to.

Finally, the popularity of Jesus' teachings against the caste system and the Hindu priests reached a critical point. The priests hired a murderer to kill Jesus, but he was warned and escaped from Benares to the north, to Nepal. There, at the city of Kapilavastu, he was welcomed by Buddhist priests to live and study with them.

The Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ further states that Jesus visited Lhasa in Tibet. There, he studied at a monastery, perhaps the Marbour Monastery, with the great sage and teacher Meng-ste (also called Mencius by the Greeks). Later, Jesus traveled across Tibet to the Ladakh city of Leh, in what is now northwestern India. There, Jesus spent a number of weeks visiting the Hemis Monastery (as discussed in Chapter 3 of this book). After leaving Hemis, Jesus visited Srinagar, and later, Lahore, in what is today Pakistan. From there, he joined a caravan traveling westward, toward Israel.

Very Ancient Memoirs

Concerning Lhasa and other events, in *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ* by Nicolas Notovitch, first published in 1894 in France, Notovitch says: "In the course of one

of my visits to a Buddhist convent, I learned from the chief Lama that there existed very ancient memoirs, treating of the life of Christ and of the nations of the Occident, in the archives of Lassa, and that a few of the larger monasteries possessed copies and translations of these chronicles."

He continues: "During my sojourn in Leh, the capital of Ladak, I visited Himis, a large convent in the outskirts of the city, where I was informed by the Lama that the monastic libraries contained a few copies of the manuscript in question." Later, he relates: "An unfortunate accident, whereby my leg was fractured, furnished me with a totally unexpected pretext to enter the monastery, where I received excellent care and nursing; and I took advantage of my short stay among these monks to obtain the privilege of seeing the manuscripts relating to Christ. With the aid of my interpreter, who translated from the Thibetan tongue, I carefully transcribed the verses as they were read by the Lama."

Notovitch continues: "Entertaining no doubt of the authenticity of this narrative, written with the utmost precision by Brahmin historians and Buddhists of India and Nepal, my intention was to publish the translation on my return to Europe."

Later, in Rome, when Notovitch showed the manuscript to a cardinal who was close to the Pope, the cardinal replied: "Why should you print this? Nobody will attach much importance to it, and you will create numberless enemies thereby."

The following is a condensed version of the manuscript first published in 1894 by Nicolas Notovitch in "The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ." The manuscript

is entitled: *The Life of Saint Issa, The Best of the Sons of Men.*

1

1. The earth has trembled and the heavens have wept, because of the great crime just commited in the land of Israel.
2. For they have put to torture and executed the great just Issa, in whom dwelt the spirit of the world.
3. Which was incarnated in a simple mortal, that men might be benefited and evil thoughts exterminated thereby.
4. And that it might bring back to life of peace, of love and happiness, man degraded by sin, and recall to him the only and indivisible Creator whose mercy is boundless and infinite.
5. This is what is related on this subject by the merchants who have come from Israel.

IV

1. And now the time had come, which the Supreme Judge, in his boundless clemency, had chosen to incarnate himself in a human being.
2. And the Eternal Spirit, which dwelt in a state of complete inertness and supreme beatitude, awakened and detached itself from the Eternal Being for an indefinite period.
3. In order to indicate, in assuming the human form, the means of identifying ourselves with the Divinity and of attaining eternal felicity.
4. And to teach us, by his example, how we may reach a state of moral purity and separate the soul from its

gross envelope, that it may attain the perfection necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven which is immutable and where eternal happiness reigns.

5. Soon after, a wonderful child was born in the land of Israel; God himself, through the mouth of this child, spoke of the nothingness of the body and of the grandeur of the soul.
6. The parents of this new-born child were poor people, belonging by birth to a family of exalted piety, which disregarded its former worldly greatness to magnify the name of the Creator and thank him for the misfortunes with which he was pleased to try them.
7. To reward them for their perseverance in the path of truth, God blessed the first-born of this family; he chose him as his elect, and sent him forth to raise those that had fallen into evil, and to heal them that suffered.
8. The divine child, to whom was given the name of Issa, commenced even in his most tender years to speak of the one and indivisible God, exhorting the people that had strayed from the path of righteousness to repent and purify themselves of the sins they had committed.
9. People came from all parts to listen and marvel at the words of wisdom that fell from his infant lips; all the Israelites united in proclaiming that the Eternal Spirit dwelt within this child.
10. When Issa had attained the age of thirteen, when an Israelite should take a wife,
11. The house in which his parents dwelt and earned their livelihood in modest labor, became a meeting place for the rich and noble, who desired to gain for a son-in-law the young Issa, already celebrated for his edifying discourses in the name of the Almighty.

12. It was then that Issa clandestinely left his father's house, went out of Jerusalem, and, in company with some merchants, traveled toward Sind.
13. That he might perfect himself in the divine word and study the laws of the great Buddhas.

V

1. In the course of his fourteenth year, young Issa, blessed by God, journeyed beyond the Sind and settled among the Aryans in the beloved country of God.
2. The fame of his name spread along the Northern Sindh. When he passed he passed through the country of the five rivers and the Radjipoutan, the worshippers of the God Djaine begged him to remain in their midst.
3. But he left the misguided admirers of Djaine and visited Juggernaut, in the province of Orsis, where the remains of Viassa-Krichna rest, and where he received a joyous welcome from the white priests of Brahma.
4. They taught him to read and understand the Vedas, to heal by prayer, to teach and explain the Holy Scripture, to cast out evil spirits from the body of man and give him back human semblance.
5. He spent six years in Juggernaut, Rajegriha, Benares, and the other holy cities; all loved him, for Issa lived in peace with the Vaisyas and the Soudras, to whom he taught the Holy Scripture.
6. But the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas declared the Great Para-Brahma forbade them to approach those whom he had created from his entrails and from his feet.

7. That the Vaisyas were authorized to listen only to the reading of the Vedas, and that never save on feast days.
8. That the Soudras were not only forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas, but to gaze upon them even, for their condition was to perpetually serve and act as slaves to the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, and even to the Vaisyas.
9. "Death alone can free them from servitude," said Para-Brahma. "Leave them, therefore, and worship with us the gods who will show their anger against you if you disobey them."
10. But Issa would not heed them; and going to the Soudras, preached against the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas.
11. He strongly denounced the men who robbed their fellow-beings of their rights as men saying: "God the Father establishes no difference between his children, who are all equally dear to him."
12. Issa denied the divine origin of the Vedas and the Pouranas, declaring to his followers that one law had been given to men to guide them in their actions.
13. "Fear thy God, bow down the knee before Him only, and to Him only must thy offerings be made."
14. Issa denied the Trimourti and the incarnation of Para-Brahma in Vishnou, Siva, and other gods, saying:
15. "The Eternal Judge, the Eternal Spirit, composes the one and indivisible soul of the universe, which alone creates, contains, and animates the whole."
16. "He alone has willed and created, he alone has existed from eternity and will exist without end; he has no equal neither in the heavens nor on this earth."

17. "The Great Creator shares his power with no one, still less with inanimate objects as you have been taught, for he alone possesses supreme power."
18. "He willed it, and the world appeared; by one divine thought, he united the waters and separated them from the dry portion of the globe. He is the cause of the mysterious life of man, in whom he has breathed a part of his being."

VI

1. The white priests and the warriors becoming cognizant of the discourse addressed by Issa to the Soudras, resolved upon his death and sent their servants for this purpose in search of the young prophet.
2. But Issa, warned of this danger by the Soudras, fled in the night from Juggernaut, gained the mountains, and took refuge in the Gothamide Country, the birthplace of the great Buddha Sakya-Mouni, among the people who admired the only and sublime Brahma.
3. Having perfectly learned the Pali tongue, the just Issa applied himself to the study of the sacred rolls of Soutras.
4. Six years later, Issa, whom the Buddha had chosen to spread his holy word, could perfectly explain the sacred rolls.
5. He then left Nepal and the Himalayan Mountains, descended into the valley of Rajipoutan and went westward, preaching to divers people of the supreme perfection of man,
6. And of the good we must do unto others, which is the surest means of quickly merging ourselves in the Eternal Spirit. "He who shall have recovered his primitive purity at death," said Issa, "shall have

obtained the forgiveness of his sins, and shall have the right to contemplate the majestic figure of God."

VII

1. The words of Issa spread among the pagans, in the countries through which he traveled, and the inhabitants abandoned their idols.

IX

1. Issa, whom the Creator had chosen to recall the true God to the people that were plunged in depravities, was twenty-nine years of age when he arrived in the land of Israel.

XIV

10. And the disciples of Saint Issa left the land of Israel and went in all directions among the pagans, telling them that they must abandon their gross errors, think of the salvation of their souls, and of the perfect felicity in store for men in the enlightened and immaterial world where, in repose and in all his purity, dwells the great Creator in perfect majesty.
11. Many pagans, their kings and soldiers, listened to these preachers, abandoned their absurd beliefs, deserted their priests and their idols to sing the praises of the all-wise Creator of the universe, the King of kings, whose heart is filled with infinite mercy.

(To read the entire text, the reader may obtain a copy of *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, by Nicolas Notovitch.)

Tibetan stone carving.

Chapter 10

Traditions about Jesus at Lhasa in Tibet:
Stories from Ladakh and Kashmir, India

> *And they killed him not, nor did they cause his death on the cross.*
>
> —The Holy Quran 4:157

According to what the Buddhist monks at the Hemis Monastery told Nicolas Notovitch, the original version of "The Life of Saint Issa, The Best of the Sons of Men," was written in Pali language at Lhasa, Tibet. The original scrolls were supposedly written during the first two centuries, A.D., and were kept in a monastery near Lhasa which was affiliated with the Potala Palace of the Dalai Lama. Translations of the scrolls were made into Tibetan

language and sent out to other important monasteries. One of those monasteries was the Hemis Monastery at Leh, Ladakh, in what is now northwestern India.

In Holger Kersten's excellent book, *Jesus Lived in India* (Element Books Ltd., 1994) he tells about a surprising number of people who were eyewitnesses of the same documents which Nicolas Notovitch saw in 1887.

Among other eyewitnesses, Swami Abhedananda, of Calcutta, India, undertook a journey himself in 1922 to visit the Hemis Monastery in Leh to verify the facts. The Swami, whose given name was Kaliprasad Chandra (born 1866) had studied at the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta. He later visited England, where he met Max Müller. The Swami, while traveling in America, had read Nicolas Notovitch's *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*. Upon returning to India, the Swami went to Leh. In his book, *Journey into Kashmir and Tibet*, Swami Abhedananda tells on page 119, that he "made enquiries with the lamas and came to know that it was true."

Following the Swami's request to see the information, his book relates:

> The lama who was acting as our guide took a manuscript from the shelf and showed it to the Swami. He said that it was an exact translation of the original manuscript which was lying in the monastery of Marbour near Lhasa. The original manuscript is in Pali, while the manuscript preserved in Himis is in Tibetan. It consists of fourteen chapters and two hundred twenty-four couplets (slokas). The Swami got some portion of the

manuscript translated with the help of the lama attending on him.

Nicholas Roerich

Only a few years after Abhedananda's visit, in 1925 the Russian painter and explorer, Nicholas Roerich, who spent many years traveling in central Asia, visited Ladakh. In Roerich's 1929 book, *Altai-Himalaya, A Travel Diary*, he wrote that he had been told about Tibetan writings which stated that Jesus had returned from the Himalayas to Judea at the age of 29.

In Roerich's enquiries among the people of Ladakh, he frequently heard about "the legend of Issa" and the high reverence for Issa. Incidentally, in New York City there is a Nicholas Roerich Museum located at 319 West 107th Street, at Riverside Drive. The telephone number is (212) 864-7752. The zip code is 10025-2799. Whenever I am visiting New York City, I always make it a point to visit that museum. Roerich's Himalayan paintings are fantastically beautiful! Poignant and unique art.

Concerning Roerich, in 1947 the Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru made the following statement: "When I think of Nicholas Roerich I an astounded at the scope and abundance of his activities and creative genius. A great artist, a great scholar and writer, archaeologist and explorer, he touched and lighted up so many aspects of human endeavor. The very quantity is stupendous—thousands of paintings and each one of them a great work of art. When you look at these paintings, so many of them of the Himalayas, you seem to catch the spirit of these great mountains which have

towered over the Indian plain and been our sentinels for ages past. They remind us of so much in our history, our thought, our cultural and spiritual heritage so much not merely of the India of the past, but of something that is permanent and eternal about India, that we cannot help feeling a great sense of indebtedness to Nicholas Roerich who has enshrined that spirit in these magnificent canvases."

Another author who wrote about the existence of the Issa manuscripts was Lady Henrietta Merrick. In her 1931 book, *In the World's Attick*, she wrote: "In Leh is the legend of Christ who is called 'Issa,' and it is said that the monastery at Hemis holds precious documents fifteen hundred years old which tell of the days that he passed in Leh, where he was joyously received and he preached."

A still further witness to the documents was a Swiss traveler, Madame Elisabeth Caspari, who visited Hemis in 1939. She and her group were on a pilgrimage to Mt.Kailas in Tibet. With Mrs. Caspari was Mrs. Clarence Gasque, head of an organization called the World Association of Faith. The librarian of Hemis showed the ancient manuscripts to Mrs. Caspari and said, "These books tell of your Jesus' stay here." Mrs. Caspari briefly held one of the three books in her hands, but the ladies did not express much interest in the writings. Apparently, at some time later, the manuscripts were removed from the monastery. These witnesses are mentioned in Elizabeth Clare Prophet's wonderful book *The Lost Years of Jesus.*

According to Levi Dowling's *Aquarian Gospel of Jesus the Christ*, after leaving India and passing through Nepal, Jesus had journeyed to Lhasa, Tibet. There, Jesus studied for some weeks or months with the great

Chinese sage, Meng-ste, also known as Mencius by the Greeks and others in the west. According to Levi's account, Jesus did not teach in Lhasa, and after his studies departed to the west, crossing Tibet.

After crossing Tibet, Jesus arrived at the Hemis Monastery at Leh in Ladakh, in what is now northwestern India. Folklore has it that Jesus stayed at Hemis for perhaps two months, or longer, and that he studied, taught, and did healings in the area. When I met and interviewed the newspaper editor, Aziz Kashmiri, in his office at Srinagar, Kashmir, he told me that the portrait he saw of Jesus at Hemis was of a robust, smiling, suntanned Jesus (Chapter 3 in this book). That would make perfect sense, because traditions describe Jesus as a great traveler who normally walked everywhere he went.

A Portrait of Jesus

In Aziz Kashmiri's excellent book, *Christ in Kashmir*, the following note appears on page 78: "When the writer paid a visit to Buddhist Monastery at Hemis, in Leh (Ladakh-Kashmir) in August,1969, he was surprised to see a photograph (sketch) of a Lama, who quite unlike other lamas was having a beard. The writer enquired from the Guide-lama "Narang Tushi" pointing to the picture as to who he was. The Lama replied, "He is Yashosh, the lama who was raised some two thousand years ago. The Russian Traveler Nicolas Notovitch, was in the same monastery when he was injured. He ran through the Tibetan Literature in the monastery and disclosed that Jesus Christ had visited Kashmir twice."

In Nelson T. Bruknaer's out-of-print book, *The Second Life of Jesus Christ*, on page 2 he relates: "After the crucifixion, Jesus lived and taught for many years in Damascus, where he met Saul later called Paul. Even to-day three miles from Damascus, a place exists which is named 'Muqam-i-Isa' which is the place where Jesus stayed. Later, together with Mary, his mother, and his brother, Thomas, Jesus traveled over the Silk Road, the great caravan route from Mediterranean to Far East. In the historical reports Nisibis is mentioned, which is today called Nusaybin in Turkey. From there the journey continued to Kashan in Persia, today known as Iran, and further to Taxila and Murree, in present day northern Pakistan. Finally it ended in Kashmir and Ladakh. This first stage of his second life, to the time of entry into Kashmir, extended over some fourteen years. During this time he changed his name to Yuz Asaf (Leader of the Cleansed)."

Also, from page three of Bruknaer's book: "According to the Scriptures and other sources available at Buddhist monasteries of Hemis and Samvas, 30 miles from Lhasa, Jesus was for Buddhism as prophesied around 500 years before by Buddha Guatama, the awaited successor. It is hinted that Jesus was named "Bagwa Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara," 'the white enlightened great merciful All-seer,' white, because of his lighter skin. He was also referred to as 'he came from a far foreign land'; as 'he was born of a Virgin'; as 'he who spoke in parables' and worked miracles: he who rejected the World's riches; preached purity of heart; taught peace and humility and forgiveness of enemies; 'he with the wheel-like marks on hands and feet'—the scars of crucifixion suffered in Palestine decades before."

The Traveling Prophet

Continuing from page three of Bruknaer's book:

> Jesus, Avalokitesvara, it is said, was the teacher of the concept, Father-God, Amit-Abha, God the Father, of never ending light. This teaching reformed Buddhism and brought about great changes during the dynasty of the Indian Kushana Kings. The teachings of Jesus became the Teachings of the 'Great Enlightenment' or the 'Great Vehicle' as it is known today throughout the world in Buddhist religion. Before the time of Jesus in Asia, only the teaching of the 'Little Vehicle' had been known in Buddhism, which amounts purely to teaching release from the recurring cycles of reincarnation. As a result of this, many years after the teaching of the 'Father-God' (Amit-Abha) by Jesus, the Fourth Buddhist Council was assembled in an attempt to remove these teachings from Buddhism. *But significantly, it is these Teachings which promoted the rise of Buddhism to a world religion. Jesus is associated with great journeys which reached as far as Japan.* (emphasis my own) There exist scripts; they call Jesus as the 'Traveling Prophet.' (Messiah also means the same in Arabic). But in every case He returned to Kashmir. In Japan, His teachings of the Father-God, (Amit-Abha) is now called 'Namu Amida Butsu.'

From the famous Persian history 'Rauzat-us-Safa' (pp. 130-135) by Mir Muhammad Khawand Shah, comes a charming description of Jesus reaching Nasibain, Armenia, which is given briefly in the following:

> Jesus was named the Messiah because he was a great traveler. He wore a woollen scarf on his head, and a woollen cloak on his body. He had a stick in his hand. He used to wander from country to country and city to city. At nightfall he would stay where he was. He ate wild vegetables, drank wild water, and traveled on foot. His companions, during one of his travels, once bought a horse for him; he rode the horse one day, but as he could not make any provision for the feeding of the horse, he returned it. Journeying from his country, he arrived at Nasibain, which was at a distance of several hundred miles from his home. With him were a few of his disciples whom he sent into the city to preach. In the city, however, there were current wrong and unfounded rumours about Jesus and his mother. The Governor of the city, therefore, arrested the disciples and then summoned Jesus. Jesus miraculously healed some persons. The King of the territory of Nasibain, therefore, with all his armies and the people, became his followers.

In 1983, Mr. Aziz Kashmiri, the author of *Christ in Kashmir*, attended a convention in Trinidad and was interviewed by the local newspaper. The following are excerpts from that interview, which appeared in The Mirror, Trinidad, Aug. 19, 1983, page 11: Said Mr. Kashmiri, "Jesus did not die on the cross, as is the popular belief, but in fact he had fainted."

"The evidence which points to this are the Gospels, all of which stated that Jesus was taken down from the cross at the 9th hour, for the other day was Sabbath day,

and in those days bodies could not remain on the cross on Sabbath."

"The histories of those days are a witness that no one died on the cross within such a short time, but normally were left to suffer for many days." (Let the reader recall that Jesus' legs were not broken and he was a strong man in good health).

"When Jesus was taken down from the cross, he was actually in a dead faint, and people thought he was dead."

"Even Pilate, the man who ordered his crucifixion, was surprised that Jesus was already dead ... but he did not know that he was in fact alive."

Marham Isa

"What happened afterwards is simple ... he was taken to a cave-like structure where he was rubbed down with Marham Isa, an ointment to heal wounds which is still used up to now."

"In fact, *Marham Isa is called the ointment of Jesus*. Anyway, Jesus was rubbed down with this ointment, and was covered with a shroud ... the same shroud making the news these days ... and it was the ointment which caused his form to be imprinted on the shroud."

"When he recovered, some three days later, he was disguised as a gardener (the same gardener Mary saw) as his friends were afraid that Pilate would see him and realize that he was really alive."

"Under this disguise, Jesus fled across the Middle East. When he appeared to the disciples, they thought he was dead, and he showed them his wounds to prove

he was alive. He was hungry and was given broiled fish which today is a delicacy among the people of Kashmir."

"Evidence points that Jesus did escape from his enemies, and he was eventually given shelter at another place of which a complete description is given."

"Kashmir is the only place which fits that description. According to the Qur'an, there he lived, carried on his preachings and died at the age of 120."

"He was buried in Kashmir, and all evidence points to the tomb in Khanyar Street, which is called the tomb of Nabi (prophet) or the Tomb of Isa (Jesus), as Jesus' final resting place."

"The Qur'an describes the final destination of Jesus Christ as a lofty ground, having meadows and springs, which learned Muslim scholars have claimed is Kashmir." Later in the interview:

"Mr. Kashmiri also said that he did not want to start any type of controversy with the Christians, but he and the people of Kashmir believe that Jesus did not die on the cross but lived in Kashmir until his death."

"We are not decrying Jesus Christ," says Kashmiri. "In fact we think highly of the Great Prophet. He was a great man, a successful prophet who was given a job to do by God and he completed it ... successfully."

"If he really died on the cross as Christians believe, then Jesus did not fulfill the Almighty's wishes." [End of interview]

Traditions from southern India, which I heard about on several occasions, say that the apostle Thomas lived and taught Christianity for many years in the southern

part of India. Many Christians today in the Indian state of Kerala call themselves "Thomas Christians." Tradition also tells about the martyrdom of Thomas, saying that in about the year 76 A.D. near Mylapore, a place near Madras, Thomas was killed from behind by a fanatical man with a spear. The tomb of Thomas exists there to this day.

Windy Corner, Mt. McKinley, Alaska.

Chapter 11

Don't Ever Urinate on An Electrified Fence:

UFO Missing Time, and other Unusual Events

The Universe may not only be strange; it may be stranger than we can imagine.

—Albert Einstein

Before I finish writing this book, I would like to share some personal experiences which I think may be interesting. After that, I will finish with some closing thoughts about Jesus in India and the "big picture."

When I was a teenager, and only a few years after my father and I had our UFO experience along the Colorado River in Texas, I was not only reading about

UFOs, but actively looking for them, also. Often, I would go for walks at night, especially along the edges of the small town where I grew up. Usually, I would carry binoculars, a camera, and a flashlight. Sometimes I would see a high-flying light which might move erratically and then dart away at high speed.

At the age of 16, I took Driver Education with my parents' permission, in the summertime. Soon after, I got my driver's license. It was great to have the freedom to drive to school, go on hunting trips, and to go on dates. Also, I liked to sometimes go on clear, starry nights to remote areas in the country and look for UFOs. Gradually, I found some people who did not ridicule UFOs, and some I talked with had seen UFOs up close.

A young lady I met who had lived in a small, south Texas town, described an experience which happened at a drive-in movie theater. She was in a car with several friends, watching the movie. The sky was clear, with a full moon. She happened to look upward, out of the car window. She was startled to see three, silvery disks, hovering silently overhead, with a slight wobbling motion. She said each disk appeared to be about 30 feet in diameter. Quickly, she pointed the objects out to her friends, who rapidly stepped out of the car and pointed upward. Soon, many people were looking and pointing. Someone turned on a flashlight, and pointed it at the objects. The disks then, one after the other, shot straight up and out of sight at incredible velocity.

Another friend told a story he had overheard while his father was entertaining a guest, a game warden from another county in Central Texas. That part of Texas is also called the Edwards Plateau, or the Hill Country, and

it has a large population of the native, whitetail deer. The story from the game warden was that a rancher suspected that one or more poachers were shooting deer at night on his ranch. So the rancher, the game warden, and his deputy, were 'staking out' the ranch one night.

Silvery-Colored Disks

They were in two vehicles, with their headlights turned off, driving around slowly, looking and listening for poachers. It was a starry, moonlit night, and at one point, they thought they saw a glint of reflected moonlight from a metallic surface. The metal object was on a hillside, and the rancher whispered that there should not be any metal objects over there. The trio silently drove closer in the darkness.

A short distance from the object, they heard a strange, humming sound. They stopped and watched, when suddenly two silvery-colored disks rose from the ground and hovered at tree-top level. The two saucers each appeared to be 20 feet or more in diameter. After hovering a few seconds, the disks shot out of sight toward the horizon, at amazing speed. The game warden said he had never believed any reports about UFOs, but now, he said, he knew they are real. He finished his story by saying he believed the disks were piloted by visitors from another solar system.

When I was about 17, a good friend of mine at high school told me one day confidentially that just the night before he had watched a hovering UFO. He had been asleep, he said, and woke up because he heard noise from some cattle. He wondered if coyotes were making

trouble. He said he looked out his bedroom window, toward his grandparents' house a few hundred yards away. There, he said, above the corral behind the house, a silvery disk was hovering in the moonlight. At times, the disk was shining down a white-colored spotlight, apparently looking at the cattle in the corral. After several minutes, the disk moved slowly away, out of sight.

My friend and I had done a lot of hunting together, deer hunting, dove hunting, and so on. We knew that area pretty well, even walking around in the dark, with flashlights turned off. My friend invited me to come out that night and help him look for UFOs. I gladly accepted. After school, I discussed things with my parents. They both had a tolerant, flexible attitude, especially my Dad, because of the UFO we had seen together and kept secret about. I promised to be back before very late, and after dinner I drove to my friend's place.

We each carried a flashlight, turned off, and also we had binoculars and a small camera with a flash. Maybe we were naive, but we had good intentions. Who could say? Maybe we would even get to see some space aliens.

My friend and I walked near the corral where the object had hovered the night before, but found no trace of it. We then walked a hundred yards, or so, apart in a long circle around the ranch. No unusual lights or objects showed up. At one point, for entertainment, we stopped walking and I made a wounded rabbit squeal with my hand and mouth to call predators. A grey fox trotted up close to investigate, we turned on our lights, and it dashed away. We continued walking, uneventfully.

I told my friend about a time when my father once accidentally called up a mountain lion one night out in west Texas. Dad and I were on a deer hunting trip and, one night, Dad was trying to impress a young couple from a big city by rabbit squealing and calling in a fox or coyote. Instead, a big bad-tempered mountain lion abruptly showed up! The lion had come running down a mountainside, expecting to steal a wounded rabbit from another predator. Earlier, Dad had insisted we leave our guns in camp, and we all ran at breakneck speed through a dry ravine to get back to camp! The lion followed behind us, screaming like crazy! Back at camp, with guns in hand, the lion disappeared for good.

A Really Shocking Experience!

My friend and I had a good laugh at the story and kept on walking. Later, as we got toward the end of the walk, we became separated. I could see the lights of the ranch house, not far away. Near the ranch house were several corrals; I stopped near one which had a metal fence of some sort. Several prized cattle were inside. Needing to relieve myself, I stood near the metal fence and began to urinate. I stood in the darkness, looking at the beautiful, starry sky and thinking about outer space and other planets.

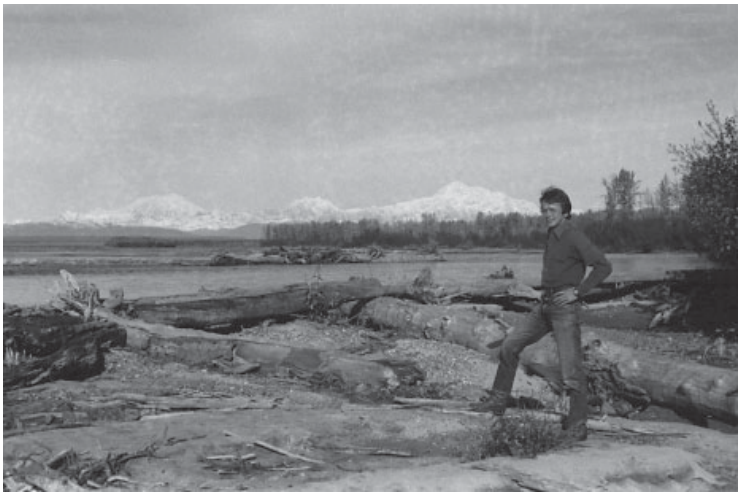
Very suddenly, as soon as the stream of urine hit the metal fence, I had what felt like a tremendous electrical jolt! Going right through my manhood and all through my body! Just crackling and zapping away! The fence, it turned out, was electrified!!!

That was one thing they had never taught me in school. The experience went on for several terrible seconds, because I felt pretty much paralized! I don't know if it was my imagination, but it seemed like things were sparking, popping, and hissing. It was wild. Finally, I made myself fall backwards, into the mud, and broke off the experience. I looked down after a moment and wondered if I had become neuter gender. But, I was okay. Guys, don't do it!

At the age of 19, I talked a friend into going with me on a long drive up to Alaska. My father had always wanted to go to visit Alaska, but he was never able to. He had died suddenly from a heart attack when I was 19. And so, about three months after his death, I had decided to go. My friend and I had done our 'homework,' in the sense that we had read books, talked with people who had lived in Alaska, and written letters. Driving up the Alaska Highway, the Alcan, was a real adventure at that time. Located in western Canada, the Alcan was unpaved then, 1,523 miles of dirt and gravel, all the way from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to the Alaska border.

Fighting Forest Fires in Alaska

My friend and I were hired that summer to fight forest fires with the Bureau of Land Management, out of Fairbanks. We were called EFF, Emergency Fire Fighters, and worked with many EFF crews that summer. We learned a lot! In later summers, I gained even more experience and got to see many parts of Alaska. On one fire, I had a really close call when the



The author at Talkeetna, Alaska, with Mt. McKinley in the background.

wind shifted dangerously, and a friend and I were trapped in dense smoke. By putting our faces to the ground, we found a layer of about six inches of clear air, and crawled quickly to safety.

I was attending The University of Alaska at Fairbanks as a full-time student, and fighting forest fires during the summers. When I was 20 years old, I was busy as usual, during the summer fire season. Some heavy rains came in late July, and the fire season seemed about over. So a lot of us took off to do things that August: work on cabins, cut firewood for the winter, get ready for the fall semester, and so forth. I planned to go on a big, 10-day hunting trip for moose and caribou. I had arranged with a bush pilot friend to fly me about 100 miles south of Fairbanks, into the

northern foothills of the Alaska Range. It is also called the Wood River country.

My regular hunting friends were all busy with other activities, so, I just decided to go hunting by myself. Besides, I thought, my bush pilot friend is very reliable and he promised to fly over my camp every three days, or so, and keep an eye on me. Also, I thought, I would be well-armed and I had a lot of good equipment and supplies. Grizzly bears, I knew, would be the main danger, but I would be careful and if I had to, I could certainly defend myself.

So I got my equipment ready, said my prayers, and met my pilot friend. It was a beautiful, cool and crisp fall morning in the early part of August (in interior Alaska, fall does begin in early August). We loaded the equipment into my friend's J-3 airplane and took off from Philips Field in Fairbanks. The J-3 flew at a pleasantly slow speed, perhaps 80 m.p.h., or so, and we flew low, maybe 300 feet or less, above the tundra and forest below. Several times we saw moose grazing, some with strips of velvet hanging from their antlers. A couple of times, we saw old World War Two vintage airplane wrecks, rusting away on the tundra.

After perhaps an hour or more, we approached the foothills, and had a breathtaking view of the great ice peaks of the Alaska Range. Mountains with names like Deborah, Hayes, Hess, Foraker, and, of course, Mt. McKinley (Denali) make a spectacular panorama. Some low clouds were hanging in the valleys of the foothills; we dipped into one valley, skirting the clouds, and watched a dozen or so wolves running in single file. I was having a great time! We landed, using the J-3's big

rubber tires, on a long, flat hilltop, which was free of boulders and had a gravelly surface.

We unloaded my gear, Burt smiled and shook my hand, wished me good luck with my hunting, and said he would fly over my camp in two or three days. If I had gotten something, or wanted him to land for any reason, I should spread out a red tarp (a space blanket) which I had. Otherwise, he would circle in the plane, and fly back. Burt climbed in the J-3, waved goodbye, and took off. I unpacked my orange-colored Eureka tent, and assembled the aluminum poles which made the external draw-tight frame. After setting up the tent, I put a few boxes and things inside to protect them in case of a rain shower.

Then I took my handgun, a Ruger .44 magnum Blackhawk revolver, made sure five cylinders were loaded, rested the hammer on an empty cylinder, and put it back in the holster. On my left side was a Bowie knife in its sheath. I picked up my bow, a Bear Kodiak, and my hunting arrows, and began hunting caribou and moose. I carried the revolver as a precaution, in case I should be attacked by a grizzly bear.

A Big Toklat Grizzly Bear

On the third day, I had still had no success with hunting. I had seen several small herds of caribou and no moose. The caribou were mostly far off, and they seemed wary of wolves. On one cloudy morning, I had stalked through a dense, drizzling fog to approach a small herd of caribou. I crawled like a wolf, and shot an arrow from about 40 yards at a group of eight, large

caribou bulls, standing side-by-side, facing me. The arrow went high, between the horns of one bull. They ran about 70 yards away and stopped. My next arrow went under the chest of one bull, and I watched them run off. I was out of practice with my archery! Too much firefighting.

Walking back to camp for lunch, the wind cleared the clouds away, and as I was in one of the shallow valleys between hills, I heard the familiar drone of Burt's airplane. I couldn't see my camp from the valley, but I could see the plane circle several times. Then I heard the engine cut back, and the sound of the plane landing. Something was wrong!

I raced up the side of the narrow valley, and was soon at the top. Burt was standing beside his J-3, a couple of hundred yards away, looking for me. I yelled and waved my arms, and he began jogging toward me. I trotted toward him; I could tell he was excited about something and a little out of breath. "What is it?" I said. "Grizzly," he said, catching his breath, "I just saw a big grizzly—a Toklat—walking in a circle around your tent." A Toklat grizzly bear, we both knew, is a blondish-colored grizzly, one with a lot of long, blond hairs on the back and shoulders. Also, some people have the opinion that Toklats are particularly bad-tempered grizzlies, maybe the worst. And grizzlies are not sweet-natured to begin with.

Burt then described how the bear looked like a very large male. As the bear walked, he said he could see the hide shift back and forth because of the fat underneath. At one point, he said, when he swooped low in the plane, the grizzly stood up on its rear legs, snarled, and

pawed the air. He said the top of the bear's head looked like it was about 10 feet, or so, off the ground. It was scary! Burt said he had landed to warn me and also to give me the chance, if I wanted, to leave that place and hunt elsewhere.

Then he said that the grizzly might possibly still be in sight nearby, if we looked into the next ravine. "Sure," I said, "Let's go." We both checked our weapons; Burt always carried a long-barreled Ruger .44 magnum handgun in the bush. I checked my .44 magnum revolver, also, and then got my .300 Weatherby magnum rifle out of the tent and made sure it was loaded, with a round in the chamber. I put the rifle on safety and then we were ready. We had both agreed to only shoot, if we had to, in self-defense. That is, if the bear charged us. Otherwise, we would only look.

We trotted a couple of hundred yards to where the grizzly had dropped down into the next ravine. Nearing the edge, we began crawling like Indians, to be inconspicuous to anything below. No animals were in sight . We looked carefully everywhere, even glancing behind us. Nothing. About then, as we laid on the ground, Burt looked downward between us and whispered, "Here's one of his tracks."

A Huge Track

There, within a foot of our faces, was the biggest grizzly track I had ever seen! It was massively long and wide, and the long claw marks were clearly visible in the soft dirt. I gasped a little, and moved a little further away, as though I had gotten too close to a rattlesnake

in Texas. Damn! That was one big bear, and he was still out there, in the big open, free and footloose. Maybe he was watching us, right then, from hiding somewhere. We walked back to the airplane, watching our backtrail.

Burt and I discussed the situation and I decided to stay for now where I was. I had become familiar with the hunting area and scouted adjoining areas; I had made hunting plans, based on the terrain. Moving to a new area, I would have to start over, and lose valuable time. And, in a new area, there could easily be other grizzlies, just as dangerous. Besides, I thought, the big Toklat grizzly had probably just been ranging through the area and was curious about my camp. Perhaps he was far away by now. I thanked Burt for his warning; he smiled and said he would fly back over in three days, or so. He climbed into his plane, waved farewell, and took off toward Fairbanks.

I decided to begin hunting caribou with my rifle, instead of my bow. The weather had cleared now, and the caribou were very wary of predators. It would be enough of a challenge to get one with a rifle. It would be helpful to have a supply of caribou meat for the winter, but if not, that would be alright, too. I was having a great time being out in nature.

During the nights now, the aurora borealis, the northern lights, were beginning to appear. Often, they would appear as shimmering, waving curtains of neon-like lime-green and intense yellow, with dashes of bright pink, red, or purple. Sometimes looking at the northern lights was a spiritual experience, deeply awe-inspiring. Also, at night, I could often hear wolves

howling in the distance. It was about the second week in August, and the leaves on many birch trees, and other trees, were turning yellow and orange, fluttering in the wind. The wild roses in the forests had a beautiful smell. All in all, it was a wonderful time to be out in such a glorious wilderness.

The scenery was magnificent the rest of that day, as I ranged over a wide area to the west of camp. The ice peaks of the Alaska Range glistened in the distance like jewels, windswept and awesome. I didn't know at that time that three years later, I would be with Ray Genet and one of his climbing teams, reaching the summit of Mount McKinley! Denali, the highest point in North America! But it happened!

My hunting that day was uneventful but pleasant; I saw a few small, distant herds of caribou, and a few cow moose and calves in the valleys. Close to sunset, I arrived back at camp, ready to cook supper and rest. To my astonishment, there was a circle of fresh, huge grizzly tracks around my tent, and only about 10 feet away from it! It smelled also like the grizzly had urinated somewhere. I almost stepped on some of the tracks, made a sound like "Huuuh?," and then examined them closely, with dead seriousness. I narrowed my eyes a little, and touched some of the tracks. It was the same grizzly! The tracks had been made in the last few hours, while I was gone.

Before, when Burt watched the grizzly from his airplane, he said it was about 100 yards from my tent, and walking in a circle around it. Now, after it knew that humans had been here, it had returned even closer. As if to express, "I am not afraid, and I may be back

again." I sat down to think. Certainly, I was an uninvited visitor in the grizzly's domain. Possibly, even, I might have been the first human that particular grizzly had ever encountered. It is a huge wilderness, and human visitors are only occasional, here and there, for brief periods.

Grizzly Bear Stories

Well, I didn't know if this grizzly was going to have a hissy fit over me or not. I had heard an abundance of horror stories about what grizzly bears can and have done to people. They can come in the middle of the night, they can rip any tent open in nothing flat. They can stick their huge head in, find your head, and crush your skull in their jaws like an eggshell. Or they can rip you to death with their claws, smash your skull with a paw, and so forth. They can lie in wait along a trail, and then rush you from a few feet away. If you can put a bullet in the grizzly's head before he reaches you, the attack may be finished. If not, things may become interesting.

I remembered that not many years ago, a big grizzly had killed four adult men, at one time, in seconds, near Gunsight Mountain in Alaska. The men, all experienced outdoorsmen, were a hunting guide and three hunters. They had all flown to a remote lake, and landed in a plane equipped with pontoons. They were carrying loads of supplies from the shore to their nearby camp when the grizzly charged. Apparently, the men were surprised and either were not carrying their guns, or did not have time to shoot. The big grizzly

killed all four men with deadly efficiency. The bear was never found.

The park ranger-type advice is simply to drop to the ground, go limp, and play dead. That is marvelous advice, I'm sure. If you are unarmed and in a national park, that is probably, absolutely the wisest thing to do. But, as they say, the grizzly may never have read that book. In such a case, the grizzly may smell you, and walk calmly away. Or the grizzly may slowly and methodically claw you and bite you to death. Or it might do it quickly. It can be hard to play dead, sometimes, when a big critter is crushing your bones with its jaws.

Some of the feisty, old-time pioneers in Alaska, would even stand quickly on a tree stump or boulder, and raise their arms, while holding up a spread coat or jacket. The grizzly may judge other creatures by how tall they look, and hesitate. The old timers would then make roaring and bellowing noises. Results were varied. If possible, climbing a sturdy tree and going high enough, was another thing the old-timers did.

The most recent expert advice I have heard on grizzlies is that there are basically two kinds of grizzly attack situations. The first and most common is a purely defensive situation, for example, a mother grizzly protecting her cubs. Or a bear is surprised and startled. In such situations, the bear may pop its teeth, growl, do a bluff charge, and so forth. Playing dead or steering clear may be the best action.

The second attack situation, the experts say, is a predatory attack. For unknown reasons, the grizzly may push things until it meets resistance. Rock

throwing, yelling, and so forth, may deter such a bear. Maybe not. If the attack is predatory, playing dead may invite serious injury or death. Consult park rangers and other animal experts before entering grizzly country.

In my situation, if I were attacked, I couldn't rely on help or support from anyone. I knew I could easily bleed to death before my pilot friend would return. Well, I couldn't call 911, or do anything like that. I had no telephone, radio, or walkie-talkie. As I started to prepare dinner, I heard a deep, ominous, growling sound from the nearby brushy ravine. The hairs on the back of my neck stood up. Was it the big grizzly? I looked down from the rim, but couldn't see anything in the dense foliage.

Back at camp, after a few minutes, I had the intuitive feeling this particular grizzly might very well come back during the night and kill me as I slept. And, I then decided I would do something proactive. That is, I would try to take some action, and attempt to make things turn out better for everyone. And I knew I might get killed trying, but I also knew I might get killed if I did nothing. After all, damn it, it is my life! And I was not asking anyone else to take a risk. I decided to go talk with the grizzly.

The Athabaskan Indians who were often on crews fighting forest fires had sometimes told me stories about how it can be possible for a human being to talk with animals—and be understood. Some of the Indians believed that bears especially, can understand human communication. I always listened with an open mind. I remembered reading a *Sports Afield* magazine article written by an Oklahoma Indian who described how

Indian hunters would often talk with the spirits of the deer. Before drawing his arrow back, the hunter would silently ask his spirit to talk with the deer's spirit, and request permission. The hunter would listen inwardly for the deer's answer.

In the wonderful books *Spiritwalker* and *Medicinemaker* by anthropologist Dr. Hank Wesselman, he describes how that human to animal communication may take place through means of the "*aumakua*," or, "higher self." He explains that the ancient Hawaiians believed that all large creatures, animal and human, possess an "*aumakua*."

Talking with a Grizzly Bear

So crazy or not, I decided to at least try talking with the big, Toklat grizzly bear. I made sure my rifle was completely loaded, with a round also in the chamber. I then put my rifle off safety, ready to fire. I checked my pistol, loaded it completely, and put the hammer on the safety position. I then looked at my Bowie knife and put it back in the sheath on my left hip, with the strap open. It was late afternoon, nearly sunset. My plan was to look for the grizzly's trail and try to get within talking distance. I would only shoot in self-defense; I would not shoot unless the bear charged me.

I descended into the brushy ravine where I had last seen the bear's tracks go. Very soon, I found fresh tracks. Following them, I thought I could smell grizzly scent. After 200 yards, or so, I found what looked like a bedding place in the brush. I had been moving slowly and quietly, being extremely alert—probably the most alert

I had ever been in my life. Slowly, I squatted down, looking all around, and put my right hand on the bedding place. It felt warm. Perhaps, I thought, the grizzly had just gotten up, moments before, and was only a short distance away, watching and listening.

Since I figured the grizzly could probably hear me, I slowly stood up, looking around carefully. And since I was in the wilderness, with no other humans around, I decided to talk out loud to the bear. I put my rifle in my left hand, extended both arms upward and outward, and said something like "Hear me Great Bear! I am a human being and a visitor here. I will only be here a few more days. I am here to hunt caribou and moose. I will only take one. I mean you no harm. If you will not hurt me, I will not hurt you. If you leave me alone, I will leave you alone. But if you want to fight me, then I will fight back, and we both may solve the Great Mystery. Hear my words, Great Bear. Let there be peace between us! I have spoken."

The brushy ravine was silent. Slowly and alertly, I walked back up the slope and returned to my camp. I made a campfire with some dead wood I had collected earlier, and cooked dinner. The big grizzly, it turned out, never returned to my campsite or showed up anywhere during the remainder of the hunt. Somehow, I think the great bear heard me and we reached an understanding.

A UFO Appears

The next couple of days were pleasant and mostly uneventful, until one evening. I had returned to camp,

as usual, after the day's hunting. I was sitting by the campfire, and had finished eating dinner. I was drinking a mug of herbal tea and watching the amazing number of stars in the clear, dark sky. I happened to look toward the east, and was astonished to see a silent, disk-shaped, hovering object above a hilltop.

From where I was camped on top of an elongated, barren hill, the object was across several ravines, to the east, and hovering above another barren hilltop. The distance to the object was perhaps between 800 yards and one mile. Below the hilltops were the brushy ravines, and nearby to the north, was the vast sweep of the forest and marshy lowlands, including the Wood River. Immediately to the south, the hills connected to even higher, treeless hills, and then to the vastness of the ice peaks of the Alaska Range.

The object looked disk-shaped, and was glowing with a soft, blue light. The blue color reminded me of the gas flame on a stove. It was hard to estimate size, because there were no trees near the object. But I was estimating that the disk was perhaps 30 to 50 feet in diameter, perhaps larger. It was a quiet, clear night with almost no wind. I strained my ears, but could hear no sound from the object. At one point, the object began to shine a beam of white light downward, moving it from side to side. Perhaps it was looking at a herd of caribou below it. Then I thought of my binoculars which were in the tent.

With my binoculars, I could clearly see the disk-shape of the object. It was no helicopter, balloon, blimp, or anything else conventional. It looked like a metallic disk which was emitting a soft, blue color. It hovered

steadily in the air, but sometimes made motions like a boat rocking in the water. "Well," I thought, "this is one hell of a hunting trip! First, I have problems with a grizzly bear, and next, I see a UFO! Damn, I thought, I'll bet it's just chock full of space aliens! But are they good or bad?"

"This is great," I thought, "just great. I could get abducted by space aliens. Or eaten by a grizzly bear. Or both!"

Then I remembered the UFO which my father and I had seen when I was about 13 years old, that winter night in a remote area along the Colorado River in Texas. That was a mysterious experience, yes, but somehow it had always seemed like a positive experience, also.

On a playful impulse, I reached over and got my flashlight, which had three D-cells. I turned it on and pointed it at the distant UFO, and said something like, "Okay, guys, here I am if you want to visit." The white searchlight underneath the object seemed to momentarily point in my direction, and then downward again. After a moment, I reflected about whether these UFO occupants were really good guys or not.

After watching the object for maybe 15 or 20 minutes, I became very sleepy and decided to get into my tent and go to bed. Inside, I zipped the tent flaps shut, as always. At least, a grizzly or anything trying to get inside would have to make some noise, which hopefully would wake me up. My rifle, loaded and on safety, lay at my left side, pointed toward the entrance. My pistol and Bowie knife lay at my right side. I changed into my sleeping clothes, got into my goose down sleeping bag, and quickly fell asleep.

Inside-Out Clothing

I woke up suddenly the next morning, with my head beside the tent flaps, which were flapping softly in the breeze. Bright sunlight was outside, and the air

was cool and fresh. I glanced at my watch; it was about 8 a.m.. I had slept much later than normal. And, I was lying on top of my sleeping bag, not inside. And instead of my feet being beside the tent flaps, my position was reversed, with my head being there instead. If a dangerous animal opens the flaps and starts biting, it is always better to have your feet there than your head. And why were the tent flaps wide open? And then, I noticed that my sleeping clothes, my turtleneck and sweatpants, were turned inside-out! What was going on?

Back then, I was 20 years old, coming from a fundamentalist Christian background, and did not drink any alcoholic beverages, beer, wine, or anything. I had never used any drugs or hallucinogens, or anything like that. I was not given to sleepwalking, and I was not using any weird medication. Something strange and unusual had happened, I felt. But I had no conscious memory of it! Why?

I stepped outside of my tent, into the bright sunshine and the cool, pleasant air. The sky was perfectly clear and a beautiful deep blue. I stretched and admired the panoramic, sweeping view in all directions. It was novel to be the only human being in such a vast area. Something was different! I felt very good, remarkably good. It was hard to articulate, to put into language, but I had the sense that my mind was expanded. It was as though my consciousness was bigger, or better somehow. It was as though I had gotten a spiritual boost somehow. I couldn't explain it, but inwardly it was very real!

Years later, at the right time, I would find out what had happened that night. But first, I would have to

develop discernment. That is, I would need to develop good judgment and to distinguish between those with whom I could freely discuss unusual events and those with whom I shouldn't.

The rest of the 10-day hunting trip went well, and my friend Burt flew me back to Fairbanks. I shaved and showered, changed clothes, and spent the next two weeks or so getting ready for the fall semester at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks. Also, to my own great surprise, I was emotionally able to finally make a clean and friendly break with the fundamentalist Christian church I had grown up with. That is, I was able to break free from the oppressive emotional and psychological barriers and leave it behind. I certainly didn't have to talk with anyone, but I politely told the minister and the knotheaded elders that I didn't agree anymore with their condemning, narrow-minded, self-righteous, hellfire-and-damnation ideas. And so, I said goodbye and left.

Years later, I was visiting a good friend in Abilene, Texas, a city which is a bastion of fundamentalist Christianity. A city so conservative it makes your teeth ache. He had been disfellowshipped, that is, kicked out of a church group for attending dances, or some other such hideous thing. He asked how my memories were about that church group and I replied, "Bittersweet. I was happy to be a basically good-hearted young person, trying to do what was right, and have fun. And yet the religious system was so oppressive and harsh." He said, wistfully, "Well, things must be better now." And I said, "Yeah, they can't be any worse!" We both had a good laugh! Perhaps many young adults stay in a less-than-

desirable situation because their parents are paying for their college education.

Back at Fairbanks, after the hunt, I was getting ready for the fall semester. It happened that an elderly lady named Ada Charlton asked me to make a recording on a cassette, reading from the Bible. Ada liked my voice, she said. She was a retired lady who was a student at UAF. I made the recording, and later, to my surprise, Ada gave me a large book as a present.

The book was *The Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* from Unity Church of Christianity. Unity, I found out, is a New Thought type of Church which includes the optional belief in reincarnation. Also, in my opinion, they are very positive and not focused on hellfire, guilt, fear, condemning other religions, or praising the glorious life of Saul of Tarsus. I became happily involved with the Unity Church.

Hypnosis and UFO Missing Time

Years later, after the UFO experience I had on the hunting trip, I began to read about how hypnosis can be used to explore what happened during UFO missing time. In such cases, a person or persons are normally going somewhere at night in a car, when they see a bright light in the sky. Perhaps they talk about the light. The next thing they realize is that they are arriving back home. Mysteriously, perhaps about two hours of time are missing. For example, if they anticipated getting home about 10 P.M., perhaps the time is 12 Midnight. They may have no conscious memory of what happened

during the missing time. But, they usually remember seeing the bright light.

Naturally, there are variations of the experience. Some people are walking at night, some are in a boat, some people are in bed, and others have daytime experiences. Among Americans, the estimates are that anywhere from 2% to 5% of the adult population have had UFO-related missing time experiences. Some researchers believe the real numbers are even higher. That is a lot of people! Yesterday, an ABC News poll showed that 69% of adult Americans believe that intelligent extraterrestial life exists!

To explore what had happened in my case, I got in touch with Dr. Leo Sprinkle of Laramie, Wyoming. Dr. Sprinkle is a leading researcher in the UFO field. He is a trained psychologist, and is retired from a distinguished teaching career at The University of Wyoming at Laramie. He and his wife, Marilyn, operate a private clinical practice at Laramie. Dr. Sprinkle is an expert in the use of hypnosis to help people who have had UFO-related missing time experiences.

Another reason I went to Dr. Sprinkle was because, in my opinion, of his good character and positive spiritual outlook. Some of my friends in the Edgar Cayce study group I attended had advised that being hypnotized is a serious matter, and it is important to choose a person with a very positive, spiritual consciousness.

Under hypnosis, I returned to the events which happened on the years-ago hunting trip in Alaska. Leo asked what, if anything, had happened after I went to bed. What I described was that the glowing disk I had

seen in the distance earlier, was now hovering about 30 or 40 yards in front of my tent. It was perhaps 20 feet in the air, and the white searchlight was shining downward. A human-sounding, female voice came telepathically into my head and said, "May we visit you again?" "Yes," I replied.

Then three human-like beings were coming toward my tent. As they approached, they made walking motions, but appeared to glide about one foot, or so, above the ground. They were silhouetted against the white searchlight behind them. They knelt, and unzipped the tent flaps, and, coming in on their knees, they extended their arms and helped me out of my sleeping bag. Then they kept their arms stretched out, touching on top of my prone body, and floated me out of the tent, toward the hovering craft. We went together, toward the white light, and then together we levitated upward, into the ship.

Aboard the UFO

I found myself on a soft table, which was apparently oval-shaped. The table was grey-colored, and was somewhat flexible, like the soft dashboards in some cars. A white light was shining from the ceiling; it was bright but pleasant. The light was diffused, and I could not see any fixture or bulbs. The sides of the circular room were of a powder-blue color. I had a pleasant feeling, very relaxed, being in the room.

I was on my back on the table, and standing peacefully at my left side, were two of the beings. Intuitively, I sensed that they were females. The most striking thing about these beings were their eyes! They

have whites and pupils, as we do, but the round pupils are very large. The pupils are circular, about the size of a large coin, such as an American quarter, or even larger. The color of the pupils is a beautiful, deep blue or a vivid purple color. Radiating from the center of the pupils, is a starburst-type of pattern, as one might see in some zircons, or other birthstones. The whites of the eyes within the skull might be the size of tennis balls.

The beings appeared to me to be a variation of human beings. Perhaps, even, they were some sort of human hybrids. They had pink skin, and mostly hairless heads. They stood from perhaps 4 feet, 10 inches tall, to perhaps 5 feet, 2 inches tall. Their noses and mouths were small; their ears were also small and close to their heads. They wore what looked like a one-piece type of jumpsuit. The material looked soft, and was a dull-silvery type of color. I didn't see that they used their mouths for speaking, although they might. I only experienced them communicating using a form of clear telepathy, with myself and each other.

They gave greetings to me and said that a long time had elapsed since they saw me before. Somehow, I felt sure they were talking about the time when I was 13 years old, with my Father, camped along the Colorado River in Texas. They said they thought I was doing well on my path. Then they asked permission to take off my turtleneck nightshirt, and do some examinations. I told them to go ahead.

Next, a metallic-looking object, about the size and shape of a football, was brought over and positioned above me. The object was not attached to anything, and it floated in the air and remained wherever it was

placed. Most of the time, the object hovered about one foot, or a little higher above me. My visitors pressed various buttons on the object, and seemed to obtain information from it. Nothing in the entire examination was ever painful.

At one point in the examination, I thought to ask my visitors where they had come from. After I gave them the question telepathically, they replied that they did not know what the Earth scientists call their star system or home planet. But they said that in their own language they call their home planet "Sy-rahs," or, "Cyros." They said that periodically they travel to other star systems to do research and observe other intelligent beings. Telepathically asking permission is part of their protocol, they said.

I then explained that I felt very excited and positive about the entire visitation experience I was having with them, and I asked if it would be alright for me to tell everyone. "No, not at this time," they explained. "You lack discernment now, the ability to judge between those you should tell and not tell. Later, with maturity, you will gain that judgment. For now, we must place a barrier of forgetfulness. You will not remember what has happened here. But, in the future, when you have discernment, you can find a way to remove the barrier. Then you can remember and tell other people about this time."

A Spiritual Boost

The visitors then asked me if I had any other questions for them. To my amazement now, I could not think

then of anything else I really needed to ask. I just felt extremely peaceful and had a great sense of well-being. Somehow, at some level, I wished the experience could have gone on for a long time.

Then the visitors asked me if I would like to have a spiritual boost? "Yes," I replied, "Yes, indeed!" A few seconds later, another being entered the room. This being, I sensed, was an older male. He projected a very loving, wise, and spiritual feeling. He walked around to the end of the oval-shaped table and stood facing the top of my head. He extended his arms toward my head, and opened his hands wide. Slowly, he placed both of his hands on top of my head, and held still. He stood there in silence for, I think, at least two or three minutes—perhaps longer. The upper part of my head felt an unusual warmth, and a tingling sensation, like many small electrical pulses.

I simply tried to relax and be open to whatever the spiritual boost was. Certainly, I could feel that something was happening! Finally, the older male removed his hands from the top of my head, patted me a couple of times on the shoulder, and began to walk away. I sent him a telepathic "Thank you" and he turned, smiled briefly, held a hand up in farewell, and left the room. I sent the same message to the two female beings who stood beside the table. They smiled, wished me farewell, and said that perhaps they might see me again at some point in the future. One of the females then placed her fingers to my forehead, and I became unconscious.

The next thing I realized was when I woke up the following morning, as I described earlier, when the tent

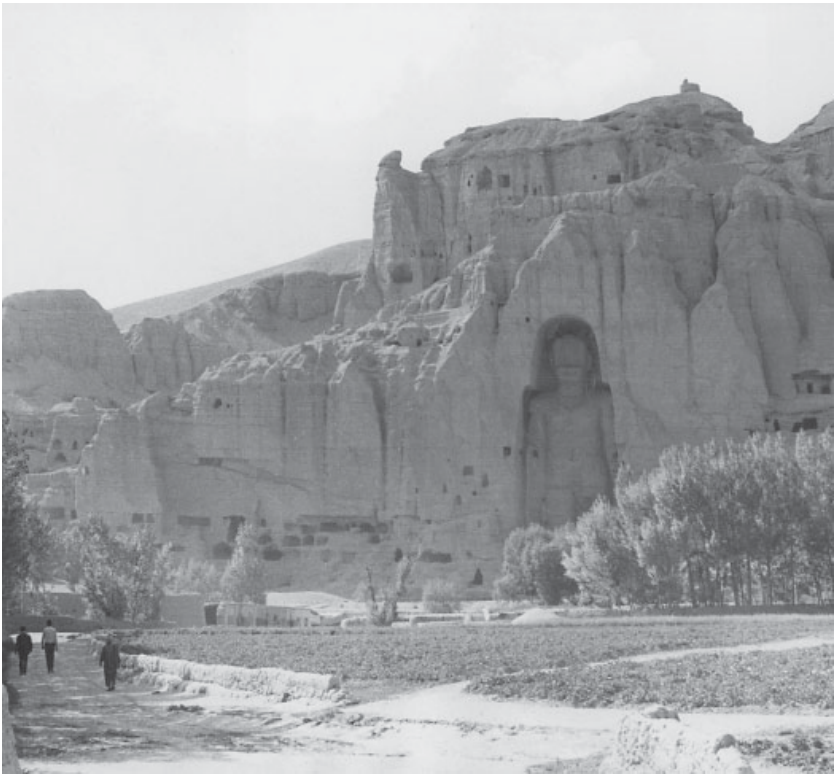
flaps were flapping in the breeze, with bright sunlight outside. The strong feelings I had of exhilaration and expanded consciousness now made sense! And so did the many peculiar and inexplicable happenings: why my clothing was turned inside-out, my switched sleeping position, being on top of the sleeping bag, the tent flaps being open, sleeping so late, and so forth.

Dr. Leo Sprinkle finished the hypnosis session and gave me a tape recording of what had been said. I thanked Leo for his help and paid him for the session. Later, I would have other hypnosis sessions with Leo and explore some past life events. Also, while talking with Leo, I found out about the annual Rocky Mountain UFO Conference which is held for about four days every June at the University of Wyoming at Laramie. It is always a spiritually-oriented conference and a great event. For more information, please see the Resources section at the end of this book.

From Afghanistan With Love

If the reader will bear with me, let me jump around some more in space and time, in order to tell some other personal stories about paranormal events. A couple of these stories are about out-of-body experiences. Both these stories, interestingly, have an unexpected, external verification. The first story comes from during my time as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Afghanistan.

Before going into the Peace Corps, while I was a student at the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, I was a volunteer with a telephone crisis line. As part of our training, a psychologist from Fairbanks conducted a



Giant statue of Buddha, Bamiyan, Afghanistan.

guided out-of-body session for our group. He had us stretch out on the carpeted floor and slowly take our awareness out of our bodies. Then he guided us to visit remote parts of the world and return. Afterwards, many of us gave vivid descriptions of exotic places, including sights, sounds, smells, and so forth. Some of us wondered if these experiences had been more than sheer imagination. I wondered also!

Not long before that, I had read a very unusual book by Jack London called *The Star Rover*. In that book, a man

being held prisoner and put in a strait-jacket, finds that he is able to make his spirit leave his body. During this "astral projection" he is able to travel through space and also through time. I was intrigued by the book and fascinated by the stories in it.

Another book I had previously read was *Jadoo: Mysteries of the Orient* by John Keel. In it, Keel describes visiting remote Tibetan monasteries in the Himalayas, where monks travel outside their bodies. They do that in deep meditation and visit other monasteries, villages, and towns. The practice is called "*linga sharira*" in Tibetan language. Upon returning to his body, a monk will describe events he just observed in a distant place. For example, a building burning in a faraway village. The observations were written down and later checked on. Often, the information was completely correct!

Back in Afghanistan, at one point, when I had been there about six months, I was having a bad day. Like many Americans, I was feeling very unwelcome and unappreciated. After work, I rode my bicycle back home, dodging piles of camel manure and wild traffic, and sat in my room. I looked outside at the garden and felt a terrible, wrenching feeling of homesickness. I wanted to stay long enough to have vacation time and see India, but at times I had an almost overwhelming sadness about being in Afghanistan. Then I thought about the out-of-body experience in Alaska, and decided to try something.

I laid down on my Afghan-made bed, called a "*chor-poi*" ("four legs") and stretched out. Then I breathed deeply for a while and began to slowly withdraw my consciousness from my body. Finally, I visualized my

soul coming out of my body through the "third eye" in my forehead. Then I went up to the ceiling of the room, and looked down at my body, resting motionless on the bed. Next, I went up through the ceiling and roof, and looked down at the house from 50 feet, or so, above. Also, I looked around at the view of Kabul and the Hindu Kush mountains nearby.

Then I turned westward, and was flying rapidly, much faster than a jet airplane, and I visualized going back to my hometown of Lampasas in Texas. My father had died about four years ago, but my mother was still living. My parents owned a dry cleaning and laundry business, which my mother still operated. I saw my hometown from the air as I approached in spirit form. I had seen it also, in years past, from an airplane, so I knew well what it looked like.

A Surprise Visit

I located my parents' dry cleaners from above, and swooped down, landing in the small parking lot behind the building. I looked around at which cars were there, observed the trees, green plants, and grass. No people were in sight. Then I entered the rear of the building as I had done before, as a child and young person, countless times. I went past the long, humming boiler, glanced at stacks of hanger boxes, and came to an open door. There, beyond the boiler room, was the scrub vat room, a place where normally only one employee at a time worked.

The eight or so employees took turns, one at a time, scrubbing dirty clothes in a running water vat. Even

though my mother owned the business, and enjoyed working the cash register at the front of the business, she regularly took a turn at the scrub vat. And, it happened that day, as I astrally projected there, that I found my mother working at the scrub vat. I was amused at how vigorously she was scrubbing away and humming a merry song. I paused several seconds, and kind of smiled and giggled a little. Then I concentrated on collecting my energy to speak and say something! I know it sounds impossible to make audible sounds without a physical body being there, but it worked! Perhaps I created an electrical impulse.

I tried to gather prana, free-floating energy, concentrate it, and say "Hi, Mom, how are you doing?" I was watching my mother's back, and at my words, she stood bolt upright, as though startled, then dropped the scrub brush. She whirled around and looked straight at me and around me. By then, I was standing near the large, old safe which was near the door and among a lot of unclaimed, hanging clothes. My mother was intently looking for me and walking toward me. About then, I felt the pull to leave, as though my energy level would not let me stay longer. I tried to say "Goodbye" and felt myself being pulled out of the building.

Then I went up, high into the air, and headed eastward, back toward Afghanistan. I was connected to my very long, thin, silver cord which connected my soul to my physical body. Rapidly, I returned to Afghanistan and to my motionless body on the bed. The house was completely dark and silent except for the ticking of a clock on the wall and the soft snoring of my housemate, another young man in the Peace Corps, who slept in

another part of the house. I changed into my pyjamas, set my alarm clock, and quickly fell asleep.

Although I wrote letters about once a week to my mother, I never wrote about the attempt at astral projection. After all, I felt it must have only been an imaginary experience, and a pretty silly experience, too. At almost the end of the year, after I had spent a year teaching in Afghanistan and traveled in Pakistan, India, and Nepal, I was able to visit Texas again. I had requested that the Peace Corps would later give me a different assignment, and I had asked for someplace in the South Pacific. It worked out later that I was given an assignment in the Fiji Islands and I taught there for two years.

Arriving Back in Texas

Arriving back in Texas one cold, December evening, my mother met me at the Austin airport. After getting my baggage, we put it in the car, and began driving away from the airport. I was astounded when, on her own initiative, my mother began to describe her experience of the "scrub vat" story—with great enthusiasm!!! I had never written or told anyone about the astral projection! My mother described how that about six months before, she had one day been working alone in the scrub vat room at the cleaners. Suddenly, as she was scrubbing some blue jeans, she heard my voice, loud and clear, coming from behind her. She said she heard something like, "Hi, Mom. How are you doing?"

She said that she was completely surprised because she knew I was on the other side of the world! In Afghanistan or India! Then she thought I must have returned

home secretly, as a surprise. From my letters she knew I was not really happy working in Afghanistan. She told me that she searched for me, for a long time, among the unclaimed clothing. She had heard my voice so clearly! I must be hiding somewhere in the room, she thought. Finally, when she had searched everywhere, she sat down and began crying, she said. Some of her employees came in the room then and found her weeping.

I explained to my mother about the out-of-body experience I had in Afghanistan and told her the details of what happened. She said she was skeptical about out-of-body experiences, but could not come up with an explanation for having heard my voice so clearly. She then said something to the effect that she felt I had been going through a very difficult period in Afghanistan. I agreed that I had indeed gone through a harrowing time.

Several years after that experience, I had another very memorable out-of-body experience which happened here in the United States, in Louisiana. I had returned from several years of teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in numerous foreign countries, including my Peace Corps experiences in Afghanistan and the Fiji Islands. Back in Texas, I had been hired to go to Louisiana to teach ESL to a group of young Saudi Arabian men. The company that hired me was called Telemedia and was based in Chicago, Illinois.

The project I was hired for was located in Natchitoches, Louisiana. Locally, the name is pronounced as "Nack-uh-dish." A group of about 10 staff were training a team of about 45 young Saudi Arabian men to operate a methanol plant. Methanol is a petroleum derivative, and is also called wood alcohol. At that

time, a huge methanol plant was being built in Saudi Arabia at a place on the eastern coast called Jubail. I had been hired for the Louisiana project to take the place of a teacher who had gone to Saudi Arabia.

The out-of-body experience I had happened after I had been in Louisiana just a few days. The company, Telemedia, had given each new employee a free month's stay at the Holiday Inn to give everyone time to find housing. One of the other new employees, also staying at the Holiday Inn, was very cheerful and gregarious. A few days after I arrived, he saw me after work on a Friday afternoon and told me to come to his room for drinks. I cheerfully accepted.

Two other employees were also there, with an abundance of beer. My new friend had bought a bottle of Johnnie Walker Black Label Scotch. He wanted us to celebrate a little with him, he explained. After two or three beers, and sipping on a jigger of the Scotch, I was feeling pretty sleepy and relaxed. Fortunately, I only had to walk a short distance to get back to my room. I never like to drink and drive! Soon, my friends ordered a pizza, and I stayed to eat some of that. Finally, my host offered me another jigger of Scotch before I left. I sipped it a little at a time. Normally, I'm not much of a whiskey drinker, but on some occasions I will have a little. I finished the drink, thanked my host, said goodbye to everyone, and left. It was about 11 P.M.

A Different Reality

I walked safely back to my room and locked the door. Whew! My head was spinning in a pleasant,

inebriated way. Not typical for me. I changed into my pyjamas and started to get into bed. Then I thought about my meditation training. Normally, every day I had been meditating for 15 or 20 minutes, using my mantra, a holy word in Sanskrit language. I had missed meditation that morning, and so, even though I had been drinking, I thought I would meditate for a while before sleeping. I sat cross-legged on the carpet, made my spine erect, focused on my breathing, and began inwardly repeating my mantra. After a deep, good meditation, I got up and went to bed. I fell asleep right away.

The next thing I realized, I woke up in a different reality! That is, like a student who has dozed off in a class, and suddenly snaps back to alertness. I found myself still in my pyjamas, but sitting cross-legged on a table. The table was perhaps four feet square, and four feet off the floor. Sitting on an identical table, and within an arm's reach, was a white-bearded gentleman wearing a turban and robes! It sounded like he was giving a very wise, learned answer to some spiritual question I had asked. I was completely boggled and awestruck; it was not like a dream! It was like I was wide-awake, but in a completely different reality! It was frightening!

With my hands, I felt my legs, chest, and face. I tapped on the table I was sitting on. Everything was real. I glanced around at the room or enclosure, which seemed perhaps as big as a gymnasium, or larger. The walls looked like a royal blue color. Some type of diffused white light was shining from above, giving good clear lighting. I reached forward with my right

arm, and with my fingertips, I touched one knee of the turbaned man. I gasped! He was real too! At that, he paused patiently, stopped speaking, and looked at me in an amused and pleasant way.

I swallowed and said in a quiet, even voice, "Am I dead?" The turbaned man smiled, "No," he said, "You and I have met here like this countless times. The difference is that this time you will vividly remember, and you can share this experience with others. Do you have some questions I can help you with?" he asked.

"Well, let's see now, let me savor this moment, as I think. Oh yes, who are you?" I asked. He smiled and replied that he is one of my spiritual guides 'on the other side' and that we meet frequently, when my body sleeps, to discuss spiritual matters. He said that on a different level, I might be experiencing normal dreams, which I could often remember. His striking blue eyes seemed to look deep within me. Somehow, the strangeness of the place had faded, and I felt comfortable, even familiar, being there and in my guide's presence.

I can't remember seeing him look at a wristwatch or clock, but he seemed precisely aware of the time, because he then said, "You must now return to your sleeping body and wake up!"

"Why is that?" I asked.

"Because," he continued, "your mother is going to give you a phone call at exactly 6 A.M.. And, when she actually calls you at 6 A.M., as she will, you will never forget that this experience here really happened!" "Also," he added, "it will be a good experience for your mother. She may freak out a little, but it will help expand her thinking."

"No offense," I said, "but you are crazy! My mother would not call me on a Saturday morning at 6 A.M., just out of the blue! It would never happen!"

My spiritual guide smiled patiently at me and said, "Regardless of what you believe or don't believe, you must go back there now! Then see what happens! You can always apologize to me later. Farewell!" He waved goodbye, and I found myself flying very rapidly through a tunnel-like structure, coming down through the ceiling of the hotel room, and abruptly reentering my body!

An Early Phone Call

I sat upright quickly, blinked my eyes, felt the bed, and looked around the darkened room. Yes, this was the Holiday Inn, alright. I glanced to my left and looked at my electric alarm clock, which has an orange-colored glow-in-the-dark face. The time was two minutes before 6 A.M.! I smiled. Was this a coincidence? Had I just had an imaginary experience? I didn't think so. I began clearing my throat and speaking out loud, practicing my voice, to sound wide-awake. I was! Just before 6 A.M., I put my left hand on the receiver of the phone, ready to pick it up.

On the first ring, exactly at 6 A.M., I quickly picked up the receiver and said in a clear voice, "Good morning, Mom. How are you doing?" There was a long pause. A long, long pause. Finally, I heard my mother's voice say, "How could you possibly know I would be calling you at this time? I didn't tell anyone else, and I didn't even decide myself to call you until a moment ago."

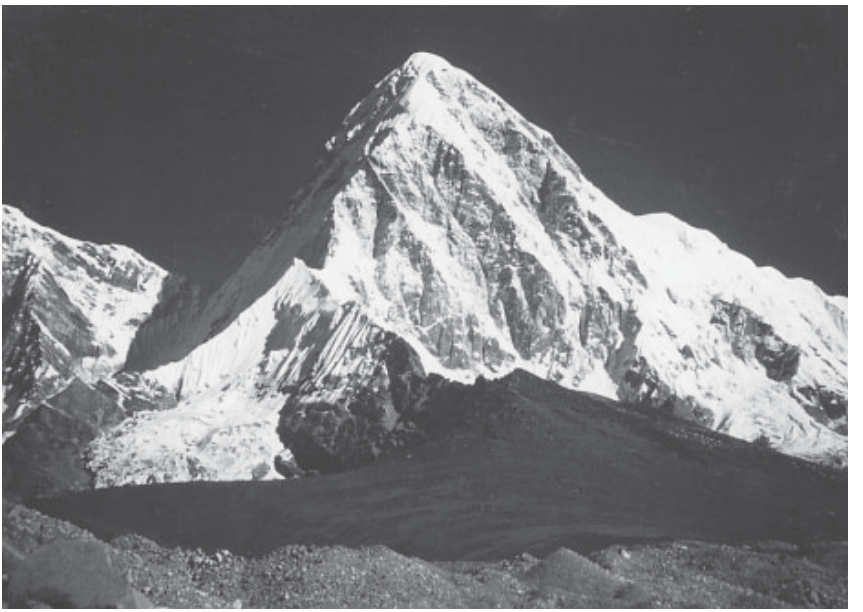
"Well," I said, "would you really like to know?"

"I'm not sure I do, but go ahead anyway," she said.

"A few minutes ago," I said, "my physical body was asleep, and my spirit was in a different dimension, a place called the astral plane. I was having a meeting with my spiritual guide. He interrupted the meeting to tell me you would call me at 6 A.M. I didn't believe him at first, but he was right! Well, what do you think?" I concluded.

"You are crazy," she said, "but listen, I'm calling because I'm making an unexpected trip to Hawaii. I'm calling from the San Francisco Airport. I'll be meeting your brother there and I'll be gone a couple of weeks. Don't worry about me and take care," she said. We said goodbye and I wished her a happy trip.

The experience I had with my spiritual guide, the phone call, and so on, still amazes me even now! Sometimes the truth really is stranger than fiction.



Mt. Pumo Ri and Kala Pattar (center, right)
beside Khumbu Glacier, Nepal.

Chapter 12

Some Closing Thoughts

If we don't change directions, we are likely to end up where we are going.

—Chinese folk saying

When Mahatma Gandhi was leading the non-violent movement in India for freedom from British rule, British soldiers were frequently sent to observe his public appearances. Sometimes the soldiers were sent in disguise, as spies, to report back to their superiors. Because of the multiplicity of languages spoken in India, Gandhi often gave speeches to large crowds using the English language. But, the British officers who sent soldiers as spies told them that if

Gandhi speaks in English, they should move back, out of hearing range.

"Why?" asked the soldiers, saying, "If we are being sent to spy on the man, shouldn't we listen closely to what he is saying?"

"Well, Gandhi is talking rubbish," said the officers, "and you are likely to become confused if you listen to such nonsense!"

What was the real reason for not listening? Gandhi was telling the TRUTH!!!

And the British officers knew that many times in the past, soldiers who listened to Gandhi's eloquent and truthful words changed their thinking. The truth Gandhi spoke was compelling, and rational men and women were often won over to his side. Such soldiers were often transferred to duty in other parts of the British Empire. But that didn't change the truth! India eventually won her independence in 1947 through nonviolent means.

Some people claim that soldiers were also sent, 2,000 years ago by the Romans to spy on Jmmanuel, who was later called Jesus Christ. There is an alleged story about an aging Roman centurion named Longinus, who was often sent to spy because of his flair for languages. The story says that Longinus spoke Aramaic and Greek, as well as Latin. He was often sent in disguise to listen to Jmmanuel's public speeches. But the truth won Longinus over to become sympathetic to Jmmanuel.

Ironically, the last duty assignment Longinus was given before his retirement was to oversee a crucifixion—Jmmanuel's. Tradition has it that Longinus used his spear to make a superficial wound in Jmmanuel's

hip and to quickly pronounce him dead—and leave with his soldiers. Professor Ravenwood's *Spear of Destiny* book contains a wealth of information about Longinus' spear and its history.

The Talmud of Jmmanuel explains that Joseph of Arimathea could tell that Jmmanuel was not dead, but was in a state of near-death. Knowing that, he quickly saw Pilate and obtained permission to take the body. Pilate, too, was surprised at such a quick death but gave permission. After the body was placed in Joseph's tomb, Joseph returned quickly with Jmmanuel's friends from India who entered through the secret, tunnel entrance. They ministered to Jmmanuel and all of them left three days later. Jmmanuel recuperated in hiding in Damascus for two years, later returning to India.

Did They Stay Dead?

As a kind of mental brainstorming, let's think for a while about some famous people, both historical and fictitious, who apparently died but later were reported by some people to perhaps still be alive. In no particular order, some of those are John Wilkes Booth, Jesse James, Adolph Hitler, Princess Anastasia, the Lone Ranger (fictitious, but interesting to think about), and of course, as we are discussing in this book, Jesus Christ (Jmmanuel), and Judas Iscariot. Naturally, the list could be made much longer. Perhaps the reader can think of a few additions to the list.

What did all these people have in common? Clearly, they all had a good reason to be dead—and to stay that way. If they were not really dead, life would be much

better for them if people continued to think they were dead. Obviously, they would move to a different location, or better yet, to a different part of the world. They would take a completely different name and use some kind of disguise.

For example, John Wilkes Booth, the alleged assassin of President Abraham Lincoln, was supposedly killed during a shootout at Garrett's Farm. But two of the Union soldiers who were present and examined the body signed an affidavit saying that the body was not John Wilkes Booth. The two soldiers had seen Booth perform in a play in New Orleans, and had met and spoken with him afterwards at a reception. The dead man, they said, was a different man than Booth. Of course at the time, there was tremendous pressure from the public and government to come to closure. After the public hangings of the co-conspirators, the terrors of the assassination could be put to rest.

About Booth, an intriguing book *The Reincarnation of John Wilkes Booth* by Dell Leonardi examines a case of hypnosis and past life enquiry. The individual revealed under hypnosis that he was the reincarnation of Booth. The fascinating story from this case is that Booth did not die at Garrett's Farm, but escaped from San Francisco on a ship bound for England. He changed his identity and lived the rest of his life as an actor in England, eventually dying at Calais, France.

Booth was also reportedly seen in other diverse parts of the world, even in Ceylon and India. Certainly, in a non-electronic age when even photography was at a minimum, escaping and covering one's identity would have been much easier.

Jesse James was, and still is, a folk hero for many people. After James' death at the hands of one of his own men, persistent rumors continued to circulate well into the twentieth century that Jesse James had survived. The rumors claimed that another man had been killed and that James had escaped to start a new life in disguise.

DNA Testing

A recent program on PBS television's Nova series was about an enquiry into the Jesse James mystery using DNA testing. The testing involved the exhumation of the remains of the body of Jesse James and the extraction of DNA material from the teeth. That DNA was compared with DNA samples given voluntarily by three of the living biological descendants of Jesse James. The results were a 99%+ positive match, almost certainly proving that the body is truly that of Jesse James.

Another famous individual whose death is clouded in mystery is Adolph Hitler. Despite the matching of dental records, some have speculated that Hitler had several unfortunate Jewish doubles created. Even Dwight D. Eisenhower was quoted as saying that he himself never believed that Hitler had died that day with Eva Braun in the bunker. The well-known psychic and author Hans Holzer claimed that he had a psychic vision of Adolph Hitler escaping Germany through Spain, disguised as a priest. Perhaps Hitler died later somewhere in South America from a brain tumor or cancer.

I think the reader can see what I'm getting at with this list: it is a mixed bag. In some cases, a physician and/or other experts made a scientific determination

that a person was really dead. In other cases there was great confusion and uncertainty about whether a person was actually dead or not. In the case of Jesus Christ (Jmmanuel) the centurion, Longinus, who made the death verdict may have lied knowingly, and on purpose, to protect Jesus. The centurion's Roman soldiers would gladly accept his verdict, and the order to go home to a hot dinner, wine, and a dry room. Remember, terribly dark storm clouds were sweeping in and a hard rain was about to begin.

The Talmud of Jmmanuel explains that Joseph of Arimathea, a very perceptive and intelligent man, could perceive as he stood close to Jmmanuel's body that he was in a state of near-death, and not yet dead. Of interesting note: some yogis in India are able to enter into a deep meditative state in which they are able to stop their heartbeat, breathing, and circulation of blood. Physicians examining those yogis have proclaimed them 'dead,' only to watch them afterwards resume their body functions and come back to life. Certainly Jesus (Jmmanuel) had studied yoga in India for many years and could perform many yogic feats. If he wanted to appear dead, he certainly could accomplish it.

Let me again at this point encourage the reader to look at *Celestial Teachings* by Dr. James W. Deardorff which is a verse-by-verse comparison and analysis of the Gospel of Matthew an *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*. Also, of great importance and value is *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* translated into English by Julie H. Ziegler and B.L. Greene. In my humble opinion, *The Talmud of Jmmanuel* is the original, uncensored Gospel of Matthew. That is, the missing book of proto-Matthew which is as

heretical as hell! The Jewish Christian convert who re-wrote proto-Matthew censored, redacted, and substituted to create our sanitized Matthew. *Celestial Teachings*, mentioned above, gives the scholarly explanations.

An Overview of Some of Earth's Problems

Before closing, let me refer again to the Billy Meier contactee case in Switzerland, and some very important information given to Meier by the Pleiadians. To obtain the exact and complete information, I encourage the reader to use the Internet and go to Meier's website or write to Switzerland (see Resources).

That website is: http://www.figu.ch/us/billy/billy.htm

Also, I have sometimes simply used: www.figu.ch

Specifically, I encourage the reader to read Contact 251 which occurred February 3, 1995. That information is in three parts, each part being about 14 pages. If you have access to a printer, you might like to print out the entire thing and read it at your leisure. The conversation is between Ptaah, a Pleiadian commander, and Eduard "Billy" Meier.

Let me briefly paraphrase some of the most important points, and again, I refer you to the Meier website above for the precise, complete, and accurate information. Or you may write directly to Meier's organization, the FIGU (an acronym; see Resources), in Switzerland. That address is in the Resources section at the end of this book.

Overpopulation of our planet is our biggest and most critical problem. The Pleiadians say that our human population on planet Earth should be about 540,000,000 people. Human birth rates should be greatly reduced.

The Pleiadians say that it is unfortunate that in our very ancient past, many human races from other star systems in our Milky Way galaxy have been 'dumped here,' in a sense. Most planets with human life, they say, have a single race of humans, which makes things easier.

The Worldwide AIDS Epidemic: I remember reading in 1989 in the first book of "The Contact Notes" that Semjase told Meier that the origin of the AIDS epidemic was started by some American homosexual men who went to Uganda, Africa and had sex with captive long-tailed monkeys. Semjase said the AIDS virus is always present in those monkeys, but it remains dormant. When it crosses to humans it becomes active. On January 31, 1999, on an ABC Newsbreak on TV's Discovery Channel came the statement: "Scientists have discovered that the origin of AIDS came from Central Africa from a type of chimpanzee."

The Money System: the Pleiadians say that we have a bizarre and perhaps unique system of money. Most human planets, they say, have non-monetary systems which use some kind of credits. People do their own mission, or life's work, and receive life's necessities, and other credits for luxuries. People do not try to accumulate wealth as power. The Pleiadians have many androids and robotic creatures who do much of the hard labor.

Genetic Manipulation for Enhanced Aggression and Rapid Aging

Genetic Manipulation: in our extremely ancient past, a deliberate genetic manipulation was performed on Earth humans. Sadly, the effect of that manipulation was to make earth humans more warlike and aggressive, more willing and eager to fight, than is normal human nature! Self-defense is a normal and very necessary part of human nature, say the Pleiadians. They explain that our ancient ancestors from Lyra were genetically tampered with by another Lyrian faction. That genetic alteration made us more like fighting machines, like willing merceneries. After our usefulness was finished, a benefactor group rescued us and hid us away on Earth. Our ancient genetic manipulation has continued to the present day. And there is more!

An additional manipulation was to alter a gene which governs the human aging process. Consequently, instead of having a human lifespan of 400 to 1,000 years—or possibly longer—the lifetime would be 100 years basically. Or much less, as we know. The intention of this was to limit the possibility that Earth humans would organize, in very ancient times, against those who had done the genetic tampering. Rapid aging! It is not really a normal part of the human condition. As I mentioned before, for the complete and accurate information on these genetic manipulations and other matters, refer to Contact 251 on Meier's website (above).

Worth noting also: as we speak of the human condition, the Pleiadians told Billy Meier that in our Milky Way galaxy alone, they know of more than 500,000,000 planets which have human beings! Like us! And of course, there are variations in skin colors, hair, and other features, but nonetheless, humans are common intelligent life-forms throughout the Creation. The Pleiadian humans and ourselves share a common, yet divergent, ancient history going back to the constellation Lyra. Again, refer to Meier's website.

A Marginal Atmosphere

Connecting with the rapid aging topic, the Pleiadians say that Earth's atmosphere is, at best, just marginal for humans to breathe. Our atmosphere contributes to our genetically-altered rapid aging! Some years ago, when I took training in SCUBA (Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus), I was very surprised when our instructor explained that the air we breathe is only about 18% Oxygen, about 80% Nitrogen, and the remainder is a melange of trace gasses such as Helium, Neon, Argon, and so forth. Only 18% Oxygen? I thought. And that's at sea level! The SCUBA tanks, incidentally, are not filled with pure Oxygen, but rather, with ordinary compressed air.

The Pleiadians say that the desirable oxygen content in air should be just above 30%, perhaps around 32%, or something like that. Billy Meier could tell you exactly. And, the Pleiadians say that many of the trace gasses in Earth's air are detrimental for human health, certainly in the long run! We would be

much better off to eventually move to a different star system and find a planet with a truly good atmosphere—and a younger sun.

Speaking of star systems, the Pleiadians say that our sun is actually a dying star—it is on the decline. More than our scientists now realize. Consequently, the sun will display increasingly erratic behavior in the future. Again, another reason for terrestrial humans to eventually plan to re-locate to a different star system. The Pleiadians explain that our Sol system's remote location, the waning sun, and the marginal atmosphere were all factors used by our ancient benefactors in choosing the Earth as a hiding place. Our benefactors were trying to hide us, the genetically-altered humans. For complete details, please refer to Meier's website shown above, and read Contact 251.

To briefly conclude a listing of some of Earth's greatest problems: the Pleiadians also say that the ozone layer is of critical importance to the Earth's well-being. They also say that any form of atomic bomb explosions do horrendous damage to the Earth—even if those atomic explosions take place underground! They say that fine matter particles which our scientists cannot yet observe are shot out by such underground explosions and thrown into Earth's upper atmosphere. There, the fine matter particles traumatize and damage the upper atmosphere, including the ozone layer. Consequently, more harmful radiation from the sun is able to reach Earth's surface, causing cancers, mutations, and other ills.

To paraphrase further, the continuing planet-wide burning of fossil fuels will exacerbate, that is, worsen,

the environmental problems which Earth faces. Global warming and the consequent, gradual melting of glaciers and the polar ice caps will eventually cause rising sea levels and grave problems.

Lastly, although there are many more problems, the Pleiadians say that Earth's governments have consistently sought to control, manipulate, exploit, and otherwise dominate the people of Earth. Governments have not tried to help people to grow spiritually, think critically, or become self-empowered. As the saying goes: "Keep their bellies full and their heads empty."

But, in the near future, the masses of people will start to grow spiritually, and the house of cards will crumble. The Pleiadians also lambaste Earth's scientists and religious leaders, saying they are mainly interested in power, status, and wealth. But, sweeping changes are coming which will affect our entire civilization. One of those changes will be proof positive that an ancient human civilization existed on Mars. We will then learn that humans both on Earth and Mars were brought here from elsewhere. The Pleiadians say humans were also brought to the planet of Milona, which was later cataclysmically destroyed and became the astroid belt. Again, the Meier website, and Contact 251 will give the complete and accurate details.

The Truth Will Prevail

There is a beautiful saying, "The truth will prevail." Meaning, the truth will ultimately win. Did anyone seriously think that Nelson Mandela would win? Or

did anyone believe the former Soviet Union would be vanquished and broken apart? Did anyone believe the Berlin Wall would be broken down? When Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on the bus, did anyone believe her action would really change anything? But in the end, the truth prevailed, and some very unlikely things have happened.

The reason I discuss these things now is in the context of thinking about Jesus (Jmmanuel) in India. For basically 2,000 years the truth has been hidden from us, from the masses of ordinary people. It is my belief that an avalanche is coming. That avalanche will begin in small ways, by people searching for the real truth about the life of Jesus. It will gain momentum as scholars, academics, researchers, and people from all walks of life discover more and more evidence pointing in the same direction. That direction will show that the mysterious, missing years in the life of Jesus was a time of intense travel, learning, and activity.

We will learn that Jesus (Jmmanuel) did not end his life on the cross. And, that he returned to India, married, had children, and lived a long and happy life. His home base there was at Srinagar in Kashmir, India. We will learn more about his extensive travels and his wonderful spiritual teachings about the Creation and its laws. Yes, an avalanche of new thinking and enquiry is coming.

The avalanche will be a significant, profound change in the spiritual beliefs and thinking of large numbers of ordinary people. As a result, our spiritual outlook and belief systems will be transformed, for the better.

Reincarnation

The simple truth of reincarnation will become an accepted, mainstream belief in western civilization, as it already is in many parts of Asia. Each human soul returns for a great number of lifetimes. We learn from our mistakes, and learn the laws of the Creation. Putting on a human body is like putting on a suit of clothes. At the end of a lifetime, we cast off the suit of clothes, and our soul returns to its true realm, the spiritual dimension. Later, after rest and consultations, we examine the status of our karma (the law of cause and effect) and look at the parameters of our possible choices. Then when we decide to return and continue our spiritual progress, we choose our parents (normally we choose persons with whom we have incarnated before, as family and friends).

Often, we incarnate with persons we genuinely like. Other times, we incarnate with persons we had problems with, in order to make better choices and peacefully resolve troubles from past lifetimes. Karma is the Sanskrit word for the law of cause and effect. The thoughts, words, and actions which people send forth bear their fruit, good seeds bring good fruits and evil brings forth evil.

The results of karma can be almost instantaneous. For example, perhaps you see someone you don't like, walking on an icy sidewalk. You wish that he or she falls down. Suddenly, perhaps you fall down instead.

Or karma may work itself out days, weeks, months, years, or even lifetimes later. The Edgar Cayce readings include the case of an attractive young woman with an

impotent husband who was confined to a wheelchair. The life reading for the woman explained that during the Crusades, the couple had been married then also. But, in that lifetime, the husband had forced his wife, against her will, to wear a metal chastity belt. That happened when the husband left to join a lengthy Crusade of perhaps two or three years. The wife was, understandably, furious! She swore a solemn vow for revenge. And, hundreds of years later, in the present, she had her chance. But, the Cayce readings said that she had grown spiritually, and decided to be faithful to her husband, to help him, and forgive him.

Karma may often manifest itself as a disease or physical deformity. One example, also from the Cayce material, is concerning asthma. In some cases, asthma can be an indication that in a past lifetime, an individual may have literally choked the breath out of another person. Perhaps, in a fit of anger, choking a bound prisoner to death with hands squeezing the victim's neck. Certainly, not every asthma case involves past life actions. An excellent book dealing with karma, reincarnation, and the Edgar Cayce readings, is Dr. Gina Cerminara's "Many Mansions."

From MIZAR with Love

As I am concluding things, let me briefly tell a personal story about some of my own past lives, as I understand them. Correctly or otherwise, I have been told by several people during past life readings that I originally came to Earth from elsewhere. That is, I was living as a human being on a planet which orbits the star

we call Mizar. Mizar is located in the Big Dipper, the Ursa Major (Great Bear) constellation.

If you look at the handle of the Big Dipper, Mizar is not the star at the end of the handle, but rather, the next one in. That is, it is the second star from the end of the handle. Mizar has a companion star we call Alcor. If the sky is clear and you are away from city lights, you can faintly see Alcor beside Mizar. The estimate of the distance from Mizar to Earth is approximately 77 light years. In the galactic neighborhood, eh?

When I have been asked under hypnosis about Mizar, the vision I have seen is of an Earth-like planet, with a spiritually advanced race of human beings. The clothing I saw reminded me of Roman-like togas, tunics, and gowns, often in pastel colors, with waist bands and head bands. The buildings I saw were sturdy, stone buildings with sloped, Tibetan-type walls. The doorways were mostly circular-shaped. I saw low tables for dining, which appeared to be made of a thick, white-marble type of stone. Cushions were on the floor for sitting and large bowls filled with fruit were on the tables.

Outside, in the streets and wide avenues, were various kinds of anti-gravity vehicles, skimming along without wheels. Beautiful trees, bushes, and flowers flanked the wide sidewalks where cheerful-looking people strolled. Somehow, I had the feeling that this was a non-money based civilization. There was unlimited, non-polluting, free energy and many robotic and android workers. The air seemed sweet and easy to breathe, with a high oxygen content.

The technology was very high, yes, but most importantly, the masses of people were very advanced

spiritually. Consequently, their consciousness and thinking was at a consistently high level. Everyone had a personal mission, or life's work, which they performed about four hours a day. Everyone received the food, clothing, and shelter they needed. There were large halls for group meditations and the people devoted much time to spiritual studies and helping each other.

Of keen interest to me, was the observation that people did not look 'driven.' That is, people did not look stressed, fear-based, and driven by busy-ness. The tail was not wagging the dog. The people were not being controlled by their civilization; they were controlling their own civilization! The pace of life looked purposeful, but relaxed and good-natured, also.

Looking at myself, I was a young man with brown, shoulder-length hair and a headband. I wore a toga-like garment with a belt. Somehow, I looked a little like Prince Valiant. My wife had dark, shoulder-length hair with a headband and she wore an elegant, simple gown. We were alone in that dining room and sat down for a talk.

Apparently, that planet was my homeworld and I had been there for very many lifetimes. In that lifetime, I was a linguist, a specialist in understanding and cataloging various languages. The subject my wife and I were discussing was that I had been invited to join an expedition to the Sol system to visit a planet called Earth. Earth was one of various planets our civilization visited only occasionally on discreet research expeditions. It was known to be an interesting place to observe, but barbaric and potentially dangerous.

As usual, we would travel through hyperspace using tachyons to reach earth, and return the same way.

We anticipated being gone about two weeks. There would be an element of danger, yes, but we were well-equipped and would take precautions. My wife knew I wanted to make the trip and she reluctantly agreed. We kissed and she told me to be careful. I promised that I would. Some time later, we said our farewells, and I left on the expedition.

Journey to Earth

The journey to Earth went routinely. Nearing the close of the two weeks of research, we unexpectedly developed mechanical problems with our large, saucer-shaped spacecraft. We landed in a meadow or clearing at the top of a high hill or mountain. Apparently, the present-day name of the location may be Borneo, in the western part of the Pacific Ocean.

Normally, whenever we landed, we generated a protective force-field around the craft. But in the present situation, to undertake the necessary repairs, we had to shut down all our power systems, even our main generator. We posted lookouts and began our repairs. Unknown to us, there were nearby tribes of humans who were both cannibals and headhunters.

Aware of our presence, hundreds of cannibals, armed with spears and bows and arrows, crept toward us in the surrounding jungle. Although we had advanced laser-type weapons, we were overwhelmed by the sheer number of the attackers and their swift ferocity. All of us were killed in the brief battle. As I am told, those events took place 20,000 years ago, or more, in the ancient past.

And, I have been here ever since! If all this is true, I would like to go back to Mizar! So I have been here, incarnating and continuing my upward spiritual path in the best way I could. If I understand correctly, it is a basic law of reincarnation that if a human being is killed on another planet, the soul must stay there and reincarnate there. That goes on until the soul reaches an "exit level" of high spiritual development.

Then the soul is able to travel to another planet which serves as a staging zone to the next level of development. If I understand correctly also, both the Edgar Cayce material and Paramahansa Yogananda mentioned the Arcturus star system as a staging zone for some of the souls leaving Earth.

Another way such a human soul can leave is for a female human visitor, in the early stages of pregnancy, to allow such a stranded human soul to enter the foetus. The female and her group then leave aboard a spaceship and return to the home planet.

A third method I have heard of is a teleportation system, but I do not know the details of how it would be set up.

Helping the Virtuous Underdogs

The pattern, I have been told, of most of my lifetimes here on Earth is that of helping the virtuous underdogs. That is, being on the side of those who opposed tyranny and injustice. And there has been a huge amount of tyranny and injustice on planet Earth! There have been victories against oppression and, at other times, those who struggled for justice have gotten thoroughly stomped

on! But, I am still an optimist and a believer that the truth will prevail. And that goodness will vanquish evil!

Frequently, in past lifetimes, I was a spiritual leader such as a shaman or holy man. Often also, I was a warrior, a hunter providing food for a village, or a scout and explorer. Many times I have been a Native American Indian. Many times also, I was incarnated in ancient Atlantis. I think perhaps I liked Atlantis so much because it reminded me a lot of my home planet in the Mizar system. But, the people of Atlantis though, had a strong streak of arrogance and self-importance which I didn't care for. The Edgar Cayce material spoke extensively about events in Atlantis. As I understand it also, about 90% of American citizens have had numerous past lifetimes in Atlantis. Does it show? Also, flying in aircraft and using high technology were very Atlantean characteristics.

Many of my past lifetimes were as a citizen of ancient Atlantis; once I was the ruler of a city in Atlantis. In another lifetime, I was the leader of a group of farmers in ancient Egypt. Another was as a Druid priest. Other times were as a Greek or Roman soldier. Another was as a rebel leader in the time of Robin Hood in the 1200's in England. Also, I was a British soldier in colonial India. Many times I was a Native American Indian holy man and hunter. Two of my most recent lifetimes were as a Catholic priest and monk. A very unusual priest. And that, is another story!

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Mt. Kilimanjaro seen from Amboseli, Kenya.

A Note about the Author

Edward T. Martin was born and raised in a small town in the Hill Country of central Texas. During his childhood, on summer vacation trips with his parents, he was able to visit many parts of the United States.

At the age of 19, he drove with a friend to Alaska to fight summertime forest fires with the Bureau of Land Management. He attended the University of Alaska at Fairbanks, where he later graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Speech Communications. At the age of 21, he made his first overseas trip to Kenya, Tanzania (where he climbed to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro), and Uganda. While in Alaska, he was actively involved with parachuting, archery, and mountaineering (including a summit climb of Mt. McKinley).

After graduating from UAF, he became a Peace Corps volunteer, teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) in Afghanistan. While in Asia, he traveled extensively in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, and Nepal. During his travels in India, he researched the subject of Jesus in India and found a surprising amount of historical evidence and folklore.

Later, he was a Peace Corps volunteer for two years in the South Pacific, in the Fiji Islands. During that time, he traveled extensively in Fiji, New Zealand, and Australia. After leaving Fiji, he lived for one year at Izumo, Japan where he taught ESL and studied the martial arts of Kendo and Iaido (Fencing and Swordsmanship), earning a Shodan degree in both.

He also taught ESL for one year at Taif, Saudi Arabia for Siyanco Corporation and later he taught ESL to Afghan refugees at Peshawar, Pakistan. In the United States he has worked as a teacher, a newspaper reporter and photographer, and as the manager of a publishing company. He is an avid student of comparative religion, spirituality, history, and foreign cultures. A gifted linguist, he speaks seven languages.

Currently, he owns and operates a publishing business and conducts adventure tours to remote sites throughout the world. Some of his destinations are: India, Nepal, Tibet, Kenya, Tanzania, Ecuador, Peru, Australia, New Zealand, and Alaska.

Mr. Martin is also available for public speaking, conferences, and workshops about the subject of Jesus in India, *The Talmud of Jmmanuel*, and a range of New Age topics. To contact the author or to request a catalogue of our unusual books and expeditions write to:

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FOREWORD

It was in 1973, and purely by lucky coincidence, that I first ran across the theory that Jesus had lived in India, and had eventually died there too. Sceptical though noncommittal about the matter, I decided to try to retrace the entire course of Jesus' life. I soon encountered the first obstacle: no contemporary sources could stand up to present-day scholarly scrutiny enough to give the necessary fine detail about the historical Jesus. Who *was* the man? Where was he from? Where did he go? Why was it that he appeared so strange and mysterious to his contemporaries? What was he really after?

Following up my investigations I finally arrived in India, where I became acquainted with several people who had spent considerable time and effort researching into the whole subject of Jesus in India. From them I received a wealth of astonishing information, along with great encouragement and valuable support.

After this book was published for the first time, in Germany in 1983, I received hundreds of letters from enthusiastic readers who not only expressed their delight and wonderment, but also made a large number of valuable comments and important suggestions. But I am particularly grateful in addition to the more discerning critics who took the time thoroughly to examine the claims I made, and so enabled me now to correct a few inaccuracies originally present. In this way, over the course of ten years, an improved work has evolved that has the capacity to allude to even the very smallest, most specialist reference concerning the Indian origins of Jesus' teachings.

Also within these ten years, the book has been translated into no fewer than fifteen different languages (including Croat, Polish, Korean and Chinese – there have been ten editions in Brazil alone). The story of the survival of Jesus and his life in India has deservedly come to gain worldwide attention.

Some of the assertions I make may seem audacious, some even improbable, but I have tried to provide solid evidence for all the claims I have put forward, and to support them with reference to

genuinely trustworthy sources. There remains considerable scope for future research in the various individual disciplines.

It has never been part of my purpose to undermine anyone's outlook on Christianity, much less to leave any reader glumly surrounded by shards of shattered faith. It is simply a matter of the greatest importance today to find a way back again to the origins – to the universal and central truth of Christ's message, which has been distorted almost beyond recognition by the profane ambitions of more or less secular institutions that have arrogated to themselves a religious authority ever since the early centuries of the so-called Christian Era.

This book is no proclamation of a new faith, therefore: it is merely an attempt to open a way to a new future, firmly grounded in true spiritual and religious authorities of the past.

Do not think I am spinning yarns:
Get up and prove things otherwise!
All ecclesiastical history
Is a mishmash of error and coercion.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Holger Kersten,
Freiburg im Breisgau,
March 1993

INTRODUCTION

The ascendancy of science and technology over the past three centuries has been accompanied by a rapid secularization of our (Western) world and a consequent simultaneous recession in religious faith. The glorification of materialist rationalism and the endeavour to explain away every facet of human existence has inexorably led to successive serious depletions in spiritual, religious and emotional life, and finally even to a loss of faith in humanity. Not the least significant among the causes of the widening gulf between religion and science – between belief and knowledge – has been the behaviour of the long-established Churches. For fear of losing their eminence in secular spheres, they asserted authority where they had absolutely none: in the field of empirical knowledge. This merely emphasized a need for greater differentiation between authorities.

The resultant schism between scientific thinking and religious belief has presented every thinking person with an apparently unresolvable dilemma. Spiritual sentiments have become increasingly restricted as the ranks of those who publicly doubt the veracity of Christ's message have grown in number, and as Christian doctrine has turned more and more into a matter of debate. Even core tenets anchored in ecclesiastical tradition – such as the nature of God, of Christ, of the Church and of divine revelation – have become mere topics for enthusiastic discussion among theologians and laymen alike.

When the most central and fundamental teachings of a Christian Church are no longer accepted as the absolute truth, even among that Church's own hierarchy and administrators, the demise of that Church is undeniably at hand. The message of the empty pews is quite clear. According to a statistical survey carried out in Germany in 1992, only one in four citizens then subscribed to the teachings of the older Churches about Jesus, whereas no fewer than 77 per cent of those asked whether it was possible to be a Christian without belonging to a Church answered in the affirmative. And in not a single sector of the population (as categorized

by the survey) did a majority believe the received Christian dogma that Jesus was sent by God. By their own shrill insistence that the traditional, dogmatically fixed creed has general (liberal) applications, the Churches themselves have further hastened the rejection of Christian orthodoxy.

Yet what is today called Christianity is in any case not so much the Word of Christ but something else: Paulinism – for the doctrine as we now know it rests in all its main points not on the message of Jesus, but on the totally different teaching of Paul. Modern Christianity only developed when Paulinism was promulgated as the state religion.

Manfred Mezger cites the Swiss Protestant theologian Emil Brunner on the subject:

> Emil Brunner has called the Church a misunderstanding. From a call, a doctrine was constructed; from free communion, a legal corporation; from a free association, a hierarchical machine. You might say that it became, in all of its elements and in its overall disposition, the exact opposite of what was intended.

A person appears in a time of darkness, bringing a message full of hope, a message of love and goodness – and what do people do with it? They turn it into documentation, discussion, contention and commercialism! Would Jesus really have wished for everything that later happened in his name? Hardly. During his life in Palestine Jesus actually made his disaffection with (Jewish) Church officialdom quite evident, distancing himself from the Church's laws and scriptural authorities, its insistence on preserving verbal niceties with conflicting interpretations as required, its convoluted hierarchy, and the associated cultic worship and idolatry.

Jesus sought to create an immediate link between God and humankind, not to set up bureaucratic channels to go through.

But Jesus' voice no longer reaches us in so naturally direct a fashion. Access to his teachings is gained only through the mediumship of a privileged hierarchy. Jesus has been managed, monopolized, codified. Wherever the true and living faith has disappeared, to be replaced by narrowminded and rigidly dogmatic beliefs, the love of one's neighbour and the tolerance which Jesus taught have been replaced by self-righteous fanaticism. Strife over exactly what is defined as the 'right' faith has left a wide swathe of misery, contention and bloodshed across the time-lines of the Christian Churches. The controversy has raged from the days of the apostles right up until our own times, and continues

still to constitute the most problematical obstacle to reconciliation between the various Christian denominations.

The Protestant theologian Heinz Zahrnt wrote:

> I have suffered a profound trauma in my career as a theologian. I feel defiled, humiliated, insulted and put to shame – but not by atheists, those who deny God, mockers or doubters who, although godless, are often very humane – no, by the dogmatists: by those who live by the letter of the teachings, thinking that that gives them the only true view of God. I have been wounded at my very heart, in the one thing that has kept me alive despite my grief: my belief in God . . .

Inasmuch as religious feeling is part of the process of growing up in modern society, it is most often relegated to the category of the irrational, and can then be regarded as unprovable, and so, unreal. Logical thought and action appear alone to determine reality. The transcendental gradually diminishes in importance because it is never personally experienced. And the main reason for this is a fundamental misunderstanding of the nature of God. The Divinity is not remote from us at some mystically infinite distance, but inside each one of us. It should inspire us to lead our lives in harmony with the Infinite – to recognize our short existence on Earth as a part of the eternal Whole.

For centuries, Western thought has viewed the individual falsely as a being separate from God. In the 'enlightened' twentieth century, modern Western thought seems less certain than ever about possible answers to the most ancient human questions about God and the meaning of life. All over the world, new spiritual centres have sprung up, attempting to give answers to these questions – questions which the rigidly held precepts of Church officialdom cannot answer. A kind of ecumenical world religion of the future is in ascendance. It is moving towards self-realization, towards a search for Enlightenment, towards a mystical and consummate vision of the cosmic context of one's individual existence, and all this by means of contemplation, self-knowledge and meditation.

The most forceful impetus for promoting such an internalization of religion has always come, and continues to come, from the East, primarily from India. Western Man must now *reorient* himself in the most literal sense of the word – turn towards the eastern dawn. The Orient is the origin and source of our experience of the inner realm.

We should not expect belief in God to be finally eradicated, nor should we fear spiritual and moral decay. Indeed, we can hope for

a germination of the seed of the Spirit, a flowering of the inner life. No gradual but complete elimination of religious faith awaits us. On the contrary, a blossoming of spiritual consciousness is at hand, and this not just for the chosen few but for all in the all-embracing ecumenism of world religions. Moreover, the goal is not in the transient world of superficial appearances, but represents a grand spiritual awakening, a turning to transcendental values, the true way of 'deliverance from evil'.

> Through Knowledge (of Truth)
> All evils are washed away.
> The true Enlightened One stands firm,
> Scattering the clouds of delusion
> Like the sun shining in a cloudless sky.
>
> Buddha

Chapter One

THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS

Nicolai Notovitch's Discovery

Towards the end of 1887, the Russian historian and itinerant scholar Nicolai Notovitch reached the Himalayan state of Kashmir, in northern India, on one of his many journeys to the Orient. He planned to go on an expedition from Srinagar, capital of Kashmir, to the Ladakh region across the Great Himalaya. With him he had enough funds to equip himself adequately, and to hire an interpreter and ten bearers to accompany him and his servant. After a somewhat adventurous trek, having successfully braved many trials and difficulties, the caravan finally reached the 3500-metre-high Zoji-la pass on the natural border between the 'Happy Valley' of Kashmir and the arid 'lunar' landscape of Ladakh.

The Zoji-la, negotiable only for a few months in the year, was at that time the only route of access from Kashmir to that strange and remote country.[1] Notovitch wrote in his diary, 'What a great contrast I experienced, leaving the cheerful, open countryside and the handsome people of Kashmir to travel into the forbidding, barren mountains of Ladakh and its beardless, sturdy inhabitants!' The strong-featured Ladakhis soon nonetheless proved to be a friendly lot and 'extremely open'.

Notovitch eventually arrived at a Buddhist monastery where, as a European, he was afforded a reception that was much more cordial than any Asiatic Muslim might have expected. He asked a lama why he should be favoured in this way, and the following conversation took place:

'The Muslims have little in common with our religion. Indeed, not long ago they waged an all-too-successful campaign to forcibly convert a number of our Buddhists to Islam. It has caused us immense difficulty to reconvert these ex-Buddhist Muslims back

to the way of the true God. Now the Europeans are altogether different. Not only do they profess the essential principles of monotheism, they have almost as much title to be considered worshippers of Buddha as the lamas of Tibet themselves. The only difference between the Christians and ourselves is that, after having adopted the great doctrines of Buddha, the Christians have parted from him completely by creating for themselves a different Dalai Lama. Our Dalai Lama alone retained the divine gift of seeing the majesty of Buddha, and the power to act as an intermediary between Earth and Heaven.'

'Who is this Christian Dalai Lama you are talking about?' asked Notovitch. 'We have a Son of God, to whom we direct our fervent prayers, and whom in time of need we beseech to intercede for us with our one and indivisible God . . .'

'It is not of him I speak, Sahib! We too respect the one you recognize as Son of the one God – not that we see in him an only Son, rather a Being perfect among all the elect. The spirit of Buddha was indeed incarnate in the sacred person of Issa, who, without aid from fire or sword, has spread knowledge of our great and true religion throughout the world. I speak instead of your earthly Dalai Lama, him to whom you have given the title "Father of the Church". This is a great sin; may the flocks be forgiven who have gone astray because of it.'

And so saying, the lama hastened to turn his prayer wheel.

Understanding the lama to be alluding to the Pope, Notovitch probed further.

'You tell me that a son of Buddha, Issa, spread your religion over the Earth. Who is he, then?'

At this question the lama opened his eyes wide and looked at his visitor in astonishment. After uttering a few words the interpreter did not catch, he explained:

'Issa is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas. He is greater than any one of the Dalai Lamas, for he constitutes part of the spiritual essence of our Lord. It is he who has enlightened you, who has brought back within the fold of religion the souls of the erring, and who allows every human being to distinguish between good and evil. His name and his deeds are recorded in our sacred writings.'

By this time Notovitch was feeling quite stunned at the lama's words, for the prophet Issa, his teaching, his martyrdom, and the reference to a Christian Dalai Lama were increasingly reminiscent of Jesus Christ.

He ordered his interpreter not to leave out a single word that the lama spoke.

'Where are these writings now to be found? And by whom were they originally written down?' he finally asked the monk.

'The principal scriptures, written over the centuries in India and Nepal according to various historal sources, are to be found at Lhasa to the number of several thousand. There are copies in some of the chief monastic foundations, made by the lamas during their sojourns at Lhasa at different times, and presented by them afterwards to their own monasteries in remembrance of their pilgrimage to the home of their great master, our Dalai Lama.'

'But you yourselves – have you no copies relating to the prophet Issa?'

'We have none. Our monastery is not an important one, and since its founding, the succession of our lamas has only had a few hundred manuscripts given into its keeping. The great monasteries own thousands of them. But these are sacred objects, and not for you to see anywhere.'

Notovitch resolved to try to examine these scriptures in the further course of his travels. Later he arrived in Leh, the capital of Ladakh, from where he went on to Hemis (Tibetān *Byang-cchub-bsam-gling* 'Isle of contemplation for the perfect'), 'one of the most distinguished monasteries in the country'.

There he witnessed one of the traditional religious festivals that take place several times each year, and as the head lama's guest of honour he had an opportunity to find out a great deal about the customs and daily life of the lamaist monks. He finally succeeded in turning the conversation round to his chief interest, and to his pleasure learned that in the monastery there were indeed scriptures about the mysterious prophet Issa, whose life seemed to bear such astounding similarities to the stories of Jesus the Nazarene.

But for the time being the guest was obliged to defer the pursuit of his enquiries, for simply to find those books among the many thousands would itself have taken a considerable time.

Returning to Leh, Notovitch sent the head of the Hemis monastery some valuable gifts in the hope of being allowed to return in the near future, and so perhaps catch a glimpse at last of the precious manuscripts. It so chanced that, a little time later while out riding near Hemis, he fell from his horse, landed awkwardly enough to break a leg, and was perforce compelled to entrust himself into the care of the monks. Recovering in bed, he sent out a heartfelt plea, and two large bound volumes of loose

leaves yellowed with age were finally brought to him. The reverend abbot himself proceeded to read aloud from the extraordinary document, which was written mostly in single verses that did not follow on from each other. Notovitch took careful notes of his interpreter's renditions in his travel diary. Later, some time after his expedition had come to an end, he arranged the verses in chronological order and succeeded in rounding off the many separate texts so as to give a continuous narrative.[2]

Its contents may be succinctly outlined (using the French translation as a basis):

A short introductory section precedes a brief description of the early history of the people of Israel and the life of Moses. An account then follows of how the eternal Spirit resolves to take on human form 'so that he might demonstrate by his own example how moral purity may be attained, and by freeing the soul from its rude mortality, achieve the degree of perfection required to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, which is unchanging and ruled by eternal happiness'. And so a divine infant is born in far-away Israel, and is given the name Issa.[3] Sometime during the fourteenth year of his life, the lad arrives in the region of the Sind (the Indus) in the company of merchants, 'and he settled among the Aryans, in the land beloved of God, with the intention of perfecting himself and of learning from the laws of the great Buddha'. The young Issa travels through the land of five rivers (the Punjab),[4] stays briefly with the 'erring Jains',[5] and then proceeds to Jagannath, 'where the white priests of Brahma honoured him with a joyous reception'. At Jagannath Issa/Jesus learns to read and understand the Veda. But by then instructing the Sudras of the lowest castes, he incurs the displeasure of the Brahmans, who feel their position and power threatened. After spending six years in Jagganath, Rajagriha, Benares and other holy cities, he is compelled to flee the Brahmans who are outraged at his continuing to teach that it is not the will of God that the worth of human beings should be judged by their caste.

There is an extraordinary correlation between the accounts in the texts found by Notovitch and those of the Gospels, a correlation that can shed more light on Jesus' own personality – especially in what he said. Notovitch's Issa opposes the abuses of the caste system, which rob the lower castes of their basic human rights, saying, 'God our Father makes no difference between any of his children, all of whom he loves equally.' And later on his travels he takes issue with a rigid and inhumane adherence to the letter of

the law, declaring that 'The law was made for Man, to show him the way.' He consoles the weak: 'The eternal Judge, the eternal Spirit, who forms the sole and indivisible World-soul . . . will proceed sternly against those who arrogate His rights to themselves.' When the priests challenge Issa to produce miracles, to prove the omnipotence of his God, he retorts, 'The miracles of our God have been performed ever since the first day when the universe was created; they take place every day and at every moment. Those who cannot perceive them are robbed of one of the most beautiful gifts of life.' Challenging the authority of the priests, he makes his position quite clear: 'So long as the people had no priests, they were ruled by natural law and they preserved the flawlessness of their souls. Their souls were in the presence of God, and to commune with the Father they had no need to resort to the mediation of an idol or a beast, nor to fire, as is practised here. You say that the sun must be worshipped, as must the spirits of good and the spirits of evil. Well, I tell you your doctrine is an utterly false one, for the sun has no power of its own, but solely through the will of the invisible Creator, who gave it birth, and who has willed it to be the star to light the day, and to warm the labour and the seed-time of Man.'

Notovitch's text goes on to describe how Issa goes further into the Himalayan ranges, to Nepal, where he remains for six years and dedicates himself to the study of Buddhist scriptures. The doctrines that he teaches widely there are simple and clear, and are particularly aimed at uplifting the oppressed and the weak, whose eyes he opens to the falsity of the priests. Finally, he moves on towards the West, passing through various countries as an itinerant preacher, preceded well in advance by a celebrated reputation. He also stands up to the priests of Persia, who expel him one night in the hope that he would quickly fall prey to wild animals. But Providence allows the holy Issa to reach Palestine safely, where the wise men inquire of him 'Who are you, and from what country do you come? We have never heard of you and do not even know your name.'

'I am an Israelite,' Issa replies, 'and on the day of my birth I saw the walls of Jerusalem and heard the sobs of my brothers in their slavery and the wails of my sisters condemned to live among the heathen. And my soul grieved sorely when I heard that my brothers had forgotten the true God. As a child, I left my parents' home to live among other peoples. But after hearing of the great sorrows that my brothers were suffering, I returned to the land where my

parents lived, in order to bring my brothers back to the faith of our ancestors, a faith which enjoins us to be patient on Earth so that we might achieve the consummate and highest happiness in the Beyond.'

It is remarkable how this latter text agrees in all its main points with information given in the biblical Gospels.

The two manuscripts from which the lama at the monastery of Hemis read aloud to Notovitch, selecting all the passages dealing with Jesus, were collections of various Tibetan writings. The originals had been compiled in the old Indian language Pali[6] during the first two centuries AD, and kept in a monastery near Lhasa which was directly affiliated to the Potala Palace of the Dalai Lama.

Back in Europe, Notovitch tried to get in touch with several Church dignitaries of high official standing in order to tell them of his astounding discovery. The Metropolitan of Kiev advised him in the strongest terms not to publicize what he had found, but refused to give any reason. In Paris, Cardinal Rotelli explained that publication of the texts would only provide fuel for those who hated, despised or misunderstood the Gospel teachings, and would be premature at that time. At the Vatican, a close colleague of the Pope put it this way: 'What good will printing it do? No one will see it as of any great significance, and you will make a lot of enemies. But you are still very young. If it is a question of money, I could arrange for a payment to be made in exchange for your notes, to remunerate you for the work you have done and the time it has taken . . .' Notovitch rejected the offer.

Only the critic, religious historian and celebrated Orientalist Ernest Renan showed a lively interest in the notes. But even then, it soon became clear to Notovitch that Renan was interested solely in using the material for his own purposes, as a member of the Académie Française, and so he did not follow up his proposals.

At long last he managed to get the manuscript published, but it did not cause much of a stir. The power and influence of the Christian Churches are so great that doubts about the authenticity of canonical teachings are simply not permitted any credence. Critics and sceptics are condemned as godless heretics, and muzzled or ostracized. At the time Notovitch himself was in no position to gather enough scientific support for his documentary evidence to ensure that it would be given serious and scholarly consideration.

Who Was Notovitch?

Nicolai Alexandrovitch Notovitch[7] was born on 25 August 1858 in Kerch', in the Crimea, the second son of a rabbi. Little is known of his childhood, but he evidently received a school education good enough later as a young man to go to the university of St Petersburg, where his main subject was history. But before that, following the introduction of compulsory military service in Russia in the year 1874, Nicolai Notovitch underwent his military training at the age of about seventeen, and then fought in the Serbian campaign against the Turks in 1876. Soon after this he took part in the Russo-Turkish war (1877–8). It would seem that Notovitch also served in the military during his student days, because in a short notice in the *Daily News* of 23 June 1894 we read that he had been an 'officer with the Cossacks'.

During the 1880s he wrote and produced a play, *Mariage idéal*, that received some small public acclaim. He was later to write another, called *Gallia*, for which he also composed incidental music.

Notovitch's historical studies had evidently engendered a lively enthusiasm for pan-Slavic ideas. Whereas his brother Osip, who had gained a doctorate as a jurist in St Petersburg, turned to philosophical and literary pursuits, Nicolai was more interested in the influence of Russian politics on world events. Both brothers nonetheless worked as journalists after their studies. In 1873 Osip Notovitch secured a post as arts editor on a daily newspaper in St Petersburg. Later (in 1883), Nicolai was also to work for this daily as correspondent for the Orient.The Notovitch brothers were among those who felt constrained by the acutely anti-Semitic policy of Tsar Alexander III, and this moved Osip to join the Russian Orthodox Church when still a young man. Nicolai must have taken the same step, because he publicly acknowledged his adherence to the Russian Orthodox religion in the French journal *La Paix*.

The year 1887 saw the appearance of Notovitch's first publication, a translation in French of the work of a Russian general, which documented his support for the idea of a Franco-Russian alliance.[8] His second work, published in French in 1890, also dealt with the *Question de l'Alliance Franco-Russe*. In the years 1883 to 1887, as correspondent of the newspaper *Novaya Vremiya*, Notovitch undertook a number of journeys through the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia and Persia. This led to a meeting with

Aloysius Rotelli (1833–91), who was papal legate in Istanbul from January 1883 until May 1887, and who was later to advise Notovitch as Cardinal in Paris.

In 1887 Notovitch set out on his important journey to India. The dates for his stay in Kashmir and Ladakh can be fixed at between 14 October and about 26 November.

His activities thereafter focused mainly on the literary sphere. He stayed for a considerable time in Paris, where from 1889 onwards he published numerous articles in the press – for example in *Le Figaro*, *Le Journal* and *La Science Française*. And it was because Notovitch fully expected publication of the Buddhist story of the life of Jesus to be blocked by the censors in his native land, owing to the restrictive nature of official policy on religious matters there, that he handed his manuscript to a publisher in Paris. Nevertheless, the first Russian extracts from his book, translated from the German, appeared in 1895 in the journal *Vera i Razum* (No.22, pp. 575–614), having successfully got past the censor.

Shortly after the appearance of his work *La Vie Inconnue de Jésus Christ*, towards the end of 1895, Notovitch was arrested while on a visit to St Petersburg, and imprisoned in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Accused of literary activity 'dangerous to the state and to society', he was exiled without trial to Siberia by the head of a ministry department. His banishment ended in 1897, but even while he was in Siberia Notovitch wrote several articles about his 'extraordinary adventure', which appeared anonymously in the journal *La Science Française*.[9] And in his novel *Une Française en Sibérie* his main theme was once more the memoirs of a Russian revolutionary.

On his return from an extended journey to Egypt in mid-1898, Notovitch set up a publishing house in Paris to produce the fortnightly journal *La Russie*, which concerned itself primarily with political and economic affairs. In the journal he continued to publish his own essays and reports.

On 2 June 1899, Notovitch was accepted into the celebrated Société d'Histoire Diplomatique, the membership of which was made up of high-ranking diplomats and noted historians, and included constituents of the Rothschild family. From 1903 to 1906 Notovitch appears to have stayed in a flat in London, at least intermittently. He then probably returned to Russia. Dating from 1906 there is also an extensive contract drawn up between him and the Shah of Persia detailing the building of roads and pipelines in Iran.[10] In 1910 another Russian edition of the Buddhist story of

Jesus' life, *The Life of Saint Issa*, appeared. Up to the year 1916, Nicolai Alexandrovitch Notovitch is named in a Russian catalogue of journals as the editor and publisher of various periodicals in St Petersburg.[11] But after that, not a single trace of Notovitch is to be found anywhere. Perhaps he was keeping a low profile, sheltering from the many attacks mounted by his opponents. It is even conceivable that the militant agitator was once and for all removed from circulation.

Criticism and the Critics

Following the appearance of the first editions of Notovitch's book in 1894, an article was published in the English journal *The Nineteenth Century* in October of the same year by the renowned German expert on India Max Müller, in which he set out to expose Notovitch's discovery as a fraud. In his piece, Oxford professor Müller – who had never been to India himself – published a letter dated 29 June 1894, in which a British colonial officer, whom Müller had contacted, confirmed that the presence of a certain Notovitch in Ladakh was 'not documented'. Müller's motives can best be discerned from a letter he wrote in 1856 to a friend: 'India is much riper for Christianity than Rome or Greece were at the time of St Paul.'[12] He adds that he would not like to go to India as a missionary himself because that would make him dependent on the authorities, and goes on:

> I should like to live for ten years quite quietly and learn the language, try to make friends, and then see whether I was fit to take part in doing something that might help to overthrow the ancient evil of Indian priestcraft, and to create an opening for simple Christian education.

This shows clearly enough what Müller really had in mind, and at the same time demonstrates the motivations of the opponents who were repeatedly attacking Notovitch.

Shortly after this article, in May–June 1895, J. Archibald Douglas, a teacher at the Government College in Agra, made his way to Ladakh, from where he attempted to expose Notovitch as a fraud. His report came out in April 1896 in the *Orientalischen Bibliografie*[13] under the lurid heading 'Documents Prove Notovitch Swindle!'

Initially Douglas had found no trace of Notovitch in Ladakh, but he was soon obliged to acknowledge confirmation by the doctor, Karl Marx. Finally he allegedly paid a visit to the Hemis monastery. In his later report Douglas said that the abbot of Hemis had never met Notovitch. The April 1896 issue of *The Nineteenth Century* (pp. 667–78) contains a statement by Douglas to the effect that the lama, on being confronted with Notovitch's text, spontaneously cried out, '*Sun, sun, sun, manna mi dug!*', which Douglas and his interpreter took to mean 'Lies, lies, lies, nothing but lies'. The remarkable thing here is that the words quoted make no sense at all in Tibetan, or in any Tibetan dialect, or for that matter in any other Asiatic language.

However Douglas elicited these statements, he was concerned at any rate to turn these claims into official documents by adding his seal and signature. In an afterword to the article by Douglas, Professor Max Müller appends a fulsome apology to the monks of Hemis for ever having at first considered that Notovitch could have been misled by the monks. He speaks of the 'annihilation of Mr Notovitch' by Archibald Douglas.

So we have two testimonies: that of the Russian journalist Notovitch, and that of the British professor Douglas. The fact that Douglas said he did not see the writings discovered by Notovitch certainly does not prove that the writings never existed.

In fact, there were other witnesses, both before and after Notovitch, who did see the contested writings in Hemis with their own eyes.

Forty years before Notovitch's visit to the Hemis lamasery, a certain Mrs Harvey described the Tibetan texts that mention Jesus in her book *The Adventures of a Lady in Tartary, Thibet, China and Kashmir*, which appeared in 1853.

After Notovitch there were several eyewitnesses who saw the relevant documents before they finally disappeared. One of them was the Indian monk Swami Abhedananda, whose given name was Kaliprasad Chandra (born 1866), who studied at the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta, and who later visited England, where he met Max Müller. In 1922 Abhedananda went on a pilgrimage to Tibet, and from the diary notes he made on the journey he subsequently compiled a book entitled *Kashmir and Tibet*. On the way to Tibet he visited the Hemis monastery where, because he had heard about Notovitch's discovery, he asked the monks of the monastery whether the Russian's story was true. 'They told me that the report was completely true' (p. 230). The abbot then led the visitor

through the rooms of the monastery until he came to a shelf, from where he lifted out a manuscript and showed it to him. This manuscript was said to be a copy of the original kept in the Marbour monastery near Lhasa, the lama explained. At Abhedananda's request the abbot helped him to make a translation of the text. Until then Abhedananda had been sceptical about Notovitch's publications – but when he saw the manuscript for himself, he no longer doubted that the controversial discovery was authentic.

Not long after Abhedananda, in 1925, the Russian archaeologist and painter Nicolas Roerich, who spent the greater part of his life in India, made further references in print to Tibetan writings which reported that Jesus had returned from the Himalaya to Palestine at the age of twenty-nine.[14] In the course of following up his investigations, Roerich made enquiries about the documents among the people of Ladakh, and learned 'the legend of Issa in various forms. The locals know nothing of any published book [that is, Notovitch], but they know the legend and speak with worshipful reverence of Issa.'[15]

After that, Lady Henrietta Merrick confirmed the existence of the writings in her book *In the World's Attick*, published in 1931. She writes: 'In Leh is the legend of Christ who is called "Issa", and it is said that the monastery at Hemis holds precious documents fifteen hundred years old which tell of the days that he passed in Leh, where he was joyously received and where he preached.'[16]

In 1939 a Swiss matron named Madame Elisabeth Caspari visited the Hemis monastery while on a pilgrimage to Mount Kailasa. She was one of a small group in the company of Mrs Clarence Gasque, the president of an organization called the World Association of Faith. The librarian of the monastery showed her the old manuscripts and said, 'These books tell of your Jesus' stay here.' And Mme Caspari briefly took one of the three books shown to her in her hands. None of the ladies present had ever heard of the discoveries of Nicolai Notovitch, and so they did not pay too much attention to the writings.

The texts were evidently removed from the monastery sometime afterwards.

Notovitch's Journey to Ladakh

Immediately after the publication of Notovitch's book, critical voices were heard right across Europe, raised by people who thought it their duty to try to silence Notovitch, and even questioning whether his journey to Ladakh had ever taken place. But the journey is well attested to not only by Notovitch's own account but by a number of independent authorities – there are other sources which make it perfectly possible to reconstruct his journey and to reach an objective view of the events.

In the autumn of 1887, Notovitch set off for India as a correspondent for the Russian journal *Novaya Vremiya*, and visited Kashmir and Ladakh in the period from 14 October to around the end of November. In Notovitch's paper *La Russie* dated 1 March 1900 there is a brief description of the itinerary: . . . I visited Baluchistan, Afghanistan and the North of India, as well as the provinces lying between the Indus and the border of Afghanistan.'[17] The geographical and chronological data are confirmed by the *Frankfurter Zeitung*, which contains an announcement that Notovitch had stayed in the town of Simla, situated at a height of 2180 metres at the edge of the Himalayan mountains, and then left from there for the north-west regions of India, going first of all to Quetta (now in Pakistan, near the border with Afghanistan).

On returning from Afghanistan to India, Notovitch followed the Indus upstream to Rawalpindi. From there he turned to the south-east and travelled to Amritsar in the Punjab, where he visited the Golden Temple, the main shrine of the Sikhs. Leaving Amritsar he went to visit the tomb of Maharajah Ranjit Singh (1780–1839) at Lahore, and from there on 14 October 1887 took the train back to Rawalpindi. There he assembled his baggage with the help of his French-speaking servant (who hailed from the French colony of Pondicherry in southern India), and started for Kashmir over the Himalayan foothills in a horse-drawn carriage. On the evening of 19 October they reached the Kashmir capital Srinagar.

Notovitch described his first impressions graphically: 'On arriving at the town itself, one sees a whole row of boats and floating houses in which entire families live together.' He stayed at the well-known Nedou's Hotel, open all the year round (which still exists today, and from which the Swedish explorer Sven Hedin left for his Trans-Himalaya expedition in the early 1900s). During his

stay in the town, Notovitch made the acquaintance of a Frenchman called Peychaud, who looked after the vineyards of the Maharajah Pratap Singh. Peychaud lent Notovitch a dog which had accompanied an expedition in the Pamir mountains two and a half months before. A week later, on 27 October, Notovitch departed from Srinagar to continue on his journey to Ladakh, and just two days afterwards he met Sir Francis Younghusband (1863–1942, later to be appointed High Commissioner of Kashmir) in Mateyan, where he happened to be making a stopover during his adventurous overland journey from Peking to Rawalpindi.

During the next part of his journey to Ladakh, Notovitch collected several *mani* stones on which were engraved the sacred formula of the Tibetans *Om mani padme hum*, which he later bequeathed to the museum of the Trocadero Palace in Paris.[18] To this day there is a piece of Kashmiri fabric in the Musée de l'Homme registered under his name. In gratitude for the donation of his collection, he was later made a member of the French Légion d'Honneur.[19]

Notovitch spent the night of 3–4 November in the Hemis monastery, where he awoke with severe toothache. He sent a messenger to the local governor, who replied advising him to visit Dr Marx of the Ladane Charitable Dispensary. Karl Rudolph Marx (also Marx-Weiz), a missionary belonging to the Moravian Brothers[20], had studied medicine in Edinburgh, and since December 1866 had been the director of the hospital in Leh. The diaries of Dr Marx confirm that he did indeed treat Notovitch (Plate 4).

Notovitch, having planned to travel back to Kashmir, suffered such an awkward fall from his horse that he broke his right leg below the knee. The accident happened near the monastery of 'Piatek' (presumably Spitok Gompa, *dPe-thub* in Tibetan). The notice in the *Frankfurter Zeitung* mentioned earlier confirms this event. Notovitch then allowed himself to be carried back to the Hemis monastery, where in due course the precious texts were read out to him.

Most of the information concerning the life and work of Nicolai Notovitch comes from the research work of Dr Norbert Klatt, published in *Orientierungen* Nr 13/1986 by Evangelische Zentralstelle für Weltanschauungensfragen.

A Mysterious Order

The mystical order of the Nath Yogis (also called Gorakhath or Navnath), found in many parts of India, has preserved an old Hindu Sutra known as the *Natha Namavali*, which tells of the great saint Isha Nath, who is said to have come to India at the age of fourteen years. After he returned to his home country and started to spread the teaching there, he fell victim to a conspiracy and was crucified. By means of the yogic powers he had attained in India he was able to survive execution, and finally – with the help of the supernatural powers of his Indian teacher Chetan Nath, a Nath Guru – he came once more to India, where he is said to have founded an Ashram monastery among the outlying foothills of the Himalayan mountains.

The Shaivite (Shiva-centred) Nath Yogis, easily recognized by their large earrings, represent one of the oldest Hindu orders of monks, whose origins are lost in the twilight of history, at a time well before the birth of Jesus and the beginning of our era, a time perhaps coincidental with Mahayana Buddhism. In contrast to many other Hindu orders and sects, the Nath Yogis do not recognize the caste system and the primacy of the Brahmans. They look on all people as brothers and sisters, and accept all seekers into their ranks regardless of their background and status. The parallels with the attitude of Jesus towards the Jerusalem temple priests and towards non-Jews, Samaritans and sinners would be hard to miss.

As modern research into the life of Jesus stands, it is really not possible to *disprove* Jesus' stay in India. There is no historically reliable source, nor any indication in the Gospels, to give us any more information than the woefully scant details we already have about the most likely sections of his life (somewhere between his twelfth and thirtieth years). It is almost as if the life of Jesus actually began in his thirtieth year, when he was baptised by John. In Luke alone we find one suggestive sentence: 'And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man' (Luke 2:52).

Chapter Two

WHO WAS JESUS?

The Secular Sources

The human personality of Jesus of Nazareth is the single subject that has had by far the greatest impact on the minds and attentions of the peoples of the world, while also representing the focus of countless books and of passionate debate. Yet Jesus' personality has remained stubbornly veiled from scholarly scrutiny. For fifteen hundred years the only accounts were those which showed Jesus as Saviour along the lines of the official ecclesiastical theology, and which had been written with the specific aim of supporting the faith of contemporary Christians, or of converting other people to Christianity. It was during the Renaissance in Europe that the first critical thinkers emerged, and in the Age of Enlightenment, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that for the first time studies were published which asked whether Jesus of Nazareth had actually ever lived. From the nineteenth century, scientific methods of historical research began to be applied to the books of the New Testament, and it is for this institution of systematic investigation into the life of Jesus that German Protestant theology may take full credit, having been responsible for the most significant advances in historical and critical research.

The best-known of these seekers of truth, the doctor and theologian Albert Schweitzer, regarded his investigation into the life of Christ as the most important and heady development in personal religious understanding. Today it is difficult for us to grasp what restrictive mental barriers had to be overcome to arrive at a historical view of the life of Jesus. According to Schweitzer it was actually dissatisfaction, and even focused antipathy, that fostered the most scientific approach. 'Finding out as much as possible about the life of Jesus is tantamount to bringing the Church up short by its basic truths, a quest for knowledge that involves a struggle more painful and more concerted than any previously.'

Well over 100,000 monographs have since been written on the subject of Jesus, yet the results of all this research into the historical Jesus can only be described as disappointing. Who *was* Jesus Christ? When was he born? What did he look like? When was he crucified? When, how, and where did he die? The books that were written in the first two centuries of our era contain too few indications to give us any real information about the person Jesus Christ. Later ancient sources are, almost exclusively, tendentious confessions of faith that take for granted a belief in Jesus as the Messiah and Son of God. It is practically impossible to find any really objective testimonies even in the secular literature.

The result is that modern science is still unable to give the exact year of Jesus' birth. Possible years range from the seventh to the fourth year before the change from BC to AD. Christ was certainly born during the reign of Herod, who died four years before our 'Christian era' (that is, in 4 BC!). Jesus' childhood and adolescence are almost entirely ignored in the biblical Gospels although the early years of life are crucial to the forming of a person's character. Even in the nebulous accounts of the short period in which he carried out his public work we find only scanty information about his life. Contemporary historians seem never even to have heard of Jesus, or if they had, to regard him as unworthy of mention. How could proper historians make no reference at all to the many amazing miracles and extraordinary events described in the Gospels?

Tacitus (about AD 55–120) in his *Annals*[1] mentions the 'superstitious sect' of the Christians, who derive their name from a certain Christus reported to have been executed at the time of the Emperor Tiberius under the governor Pontius. This short account was written by the great Roman historian in around AD 108 – some eighty years after the Crucifixion – and was based on stories circulating at that time. Pliny the Younger[2] (about AD 61–114) and Suetonius[3] (about AD 65–135) also mention the Christian sect, but do not have a single word to say about the person Jesus Christ.

The historian Suetonius was treasurer to the Roman Emperor Hadrian, and so had access to state documents in the imperial archives. Drawing on these documents, he made notes of all the historically significant events that had taken place during the reigns of previous emperors. They included an event that occurred in the time of the emperor Claudius, who reigned from AD 41 to 54. Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome because they were under the influence of a certain 'Chrestos', and had caused civil

unrest. This shows that there were already followers of the Christian religion in Rome in about AD 50.

The Jewish historian Joseph ben Matthias (AD 37–about 100), who became a Roman citizen and took the name Flavius Josephus, published an imposing work entitled *The Antiquities of the Jews* in about the year 93. It represents a kind of history of the world from the time of Creation up to the beginning of the reign of the Emperor Nero, and was intended specially to acquaint non-Jewish readers with the history of the Jews. He gives a very detailed account of politics and society at the time of Jesus, and refers also to John the Baptist, Herod, and Pontius Pilate, but there is only one solitary mention of the name Jesus Christus, and that is in reference to the stoning of a man named James (Jacob) 'who was a brother of Jesus, who they call Christus'. Not until the third century was a work produced at the hands of a Christian – a forgery entitled *Testimonium Flavianum*, in which the Jewish Josephus is apparently converted to Christianity and attests to the miracles and the Resurrection of Christ.[4] But the Church writers Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Cyprian are evidently unaware of any such Christian change of heart, and Origen[5] (about 185–254) makes a point of saying more than once that Josephus did not believe in Christ.

The writer Justus of Tiberias, also Jewish, was a contemporary of Josephus and lived in Tiberias, near Capernaum where Jesus was said often to have often stayed. He wrote an extensive history that began with Moses and went up to his own times, but never once did he mention Jesus. The great Jewish scholar Philo of Alexandria was a contemporary of Jesus; some fifty of his writings have come down to us. He proves to be something of a specialist on biblical writings and on Jewish sects, but he too has not a single word to say about Jesus.[6] It is only from the embittered anti-Christian Celsus that a few historical facts can be gleaned – although he is hardly flattering to whom he calls the 'idealized' Jesus. Celsus' belligerent writings contain some information that is examined in greater detail later in this book.

The one real source for historical research would thus seem to be the collection of scriptures that is the New Testament.

The Gospels

The Greek term for 'gospel' is *eu-angelion*, which simply means 'good tidings'. It existed as a compound word long before Christianity applied it to the message of Jesus. One of the titles given to the Emperor Augustus, for example, was Saviour of the World, and his birthday was accordingly referred to as 'the day of the *eu-angelion*'.

The New Testament contains four Gospels named after Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They represent a selection from a much larger number of Gospels that were in use among the various communities and sects of early Christianity before the New Testament was formally put together. Texts that were later taken out are called apocryphal (from the Greek *apo-kryphos* 'hidden', therefore 'more obscure'). Many were destroyed, but some of those that have survived shed a very ambiguous and intriguing light on the person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The sheer number and diversity of religious groupings threatened to split early Christian communities into countless factions and to cause internecine strife within Christendom. The Roman author Ammianus Marcellinus commented: 'Not even wild animals thirsty for blood rage against each other in the way that many Christians rage against their brothers in faith.'[7] Even the early Church authority Clement of Alexandria perceived such dissension over the various tenets of faith as the greatest obstacle in spreading the faith.[8] And Celsus, the overt critic of Christianity in the second century, wrote that the single element that the various groups held in common was the adjective 'Christian'.[9] In the face of such a plethora of fundamentally differing writings on Christ's life, acts and sayings, the leaders of the early Church saw only one way out of a chaotic situation that was inexorably leading towards the complete destruction of the conflicting communities: a unification, a closing of the ranks, by formally authenticating a group of selected Gospels that had been made to agree.

Papias of Hierapolis, who is counted among the Apostolic Fathers, made an attempt to do this in about AD 110, but failed because of the resistance of individual communities. It was not until the end of the second century that Irenaeus – who even then had to rely on the threat of holy sanctions – managed once and for all to institute the four Gospels in the canon that is still considered valid today. The criterion for the inclusion of each of them was that

they could all be directly traced back to a disciple of Jesus, although that too was not straightforward, of course. It remains impossible to determine exactly when and how these Gospels came into being because there is no original text of any of them extant – moreover, there is no clue as to where an original might ever have been located. To date them is similarly impossible, even in approximate terms. The most probable dates, according to the most recent research, are for Mark shortly before AD 70, for Matthew shortly after AD 70, for Luke somewhere between AD 75 and 80 (some authorities would prefer a date closer to AD 100), and it would seem that the Gospel of John was not written until as late as the first decades of the second century. So if Jesus was crucified in around AD 30, the first written records of his existence evidently did not originate until after two or three generations had passed (for the moment leaving aside the epistles of Paul, which call for special treatment).

The first three of the Gospels – Matthew, Mark and Luke – are very similar to each other. Indeed, Matthew and Luke seem to derive much of their textual content from Mark. The Gospel According to Mark must therefore have existed before the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. The canonical Mark text contains descriptions of a few events that are not included in either Matthew or Luke, however, and for which they substitute stories that have no parallel in Mark or are expressed very differently from them. This rather suggests that the two later Gospels used a kind of 'proto-Mark' as a source, which was formed into the canonical text only subsequently.

Much has been written by theologians in support of the existence of this hypothetical proto-text, but the theologian Gunther Bornkamm believes that 'the attempt to reconstruct proto-Mark remains a futile undertaking'.[10]

In the Mark text there is an evident desire to keep the messianic status of Jesus as secret as possible. Jesus does not permit any proclamation that he is the Messiah and indeed he expressly forbids his disciples to declare any such thing (Mark 8:30).

In Matthew, Jesus is portrayed as the consummation of the Mosaic religion, and as the Messiah announced by the prophets. It has long been accepted by theologians that the Gospel concentrates on depicting Jesus as the Word Made Flesh. In addition, the writer of Matthew was evidently no historian, and never intended to write either a chronological account or a biography of Jesus.

The writer of Luke's Gospel includes a number of distinct his-

torical events in his account of Jesus' life. And yet despite this, no coherent life story emerges. Again, then, there is a lack of any genuinely chronological, historical foundation – there must simply have been no more biographical material available because even these early Christian communities no longer possessed such data. Even at this early stage, the historical figure of Jesus had already been pushed far into the background in favour of his religious image. The text of Luke contains little of Judaism and, written in Hellenist style, is aimed mainly at the Greeks and Romans. Here Jesus is no longer a national Messiah but the Saviour of the world.

On one point, Luke's Gospel even directly contradicts the Gospels of Mark and Matthew: their version of Jesus' final words sends the apostles out into the world preaching to all nations, whereas in the 24th chapter of Luke the exact opposite is stated: they are told to 'tarry . . . in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high' (Luke 24:49).

In the Acts of the Apostles (attributed to the author of Luke's Gospel), the presence of the disciples in Jerusalem is referred to more than once, and with special emphasis. The writer is endeavouring to prove that Jerusalem was Christianity's focal point of origin, although it is a historical fact that Christian communities by then already existed elsewhere. Luke makes a point of dwelling on the miracle of Pentecost in order to show how the existence of Christian sects beyond Palestine can be accounted for as radiating from that centre. By a 'divine' miracle the disciples suddenly receive the gift of speaking in 'foreign tongues', so providing a simple solution to the potential problem of language barriers.

The Gospel ascribed to John is without doubt the latest of all the canonical accounts of the life of Jesus. Early Christian writings first mention the existence of the Gospel in the mid-second century. A few lines of a papyrus record written in Greek, discovered by the English historian Grenfell, indicate that the Gospel cannot be older than the early second century. It is more a philosophical work constructed on the basis of, and complementary to, the first three Gospels. Irenaeus claims that the author John was the man called John who was the favourite of Jesus, but this idea can definitively be ruled out because the simple fisherman from Galilee could hardly have been educated extensively enough in theology and in philosophy, or have been so literate in Greek, as the author of this Gospel evidently was.

In the Gospel of John there are authentic details of Jesus' life, but they are thoroughly embedded in a matrix of religious philoso-

phy centred on Jesus. Added to this, there is the time-lapse of at least eighty years between the Crucifixion and the writing of the Gospel, so although the contents of the book correspond closely to the ideas of Jesus, the book represents only a very fragile medium for research into Jesus' life.

In a considerable number of Protestant theological writings, the so-called *Collection of Jesus' Sayings* (also known as Q or *Logia*) has recently been accorded immense importance. Rudolf Bultmann holds that the Sayings were compiled in the very first Palestinian communities; they belong to the oldest traditions of these communities. But Bultmann adds, 'There is no certainty that the words of this oldest stratum of oral tradition were actually spoken by Jesus. Perhaps this stratum itself has its own more complex historical background.' He continues, 'The tradition collects the Lord's sayings, remoulds them, and adds to them. Furthermore, other kinds of sayings are also collected, so that some of the words included in the *Collection of Sayings* will have been put into Jesus' mouth by others.'

Historians today are able to present practically complete life stories of Pontius Pilate and of Herod – characters whose main interest is simply their connection with Jesus. Equally complete biographies of other contemporaries, and of prominent figures of even earlier periods, are similarly available. Yet a few meagre lines containing little descriptive detail are all there is to show for the life of Jesus until his thirtieth year, and even these are too scanty to serve as documentary evidence. A New Testament scholar in Tübingen, Ernst Käsemann, sums up the results to date of research into the life of Jesus:

> It is shattering to find just how little [of what the New Testament says about Jesus] can be described as authentic . . . All that can be attributed with some degree of confidence to the historical Jesus himself is a few words of the Sermon on the Mount, some parables, the confrontation with the Pharisees, and a few other odd phrases here and there.[11]

Biblical experts still disagree among themselves about which 'quotes' can genuinely be ascribed to Jesus. In his book *The Unknown Words of Jesus* (*Unbekännte Jesus-Worte*[12]), the religious historian Joachim Jeremias narrows the selection down to a mere twenty-one quotations that definitely issued from the mouth of Jesus. And the theological critic Bultmann maintains that 'the personality of Jesus, the clear picture of himself and his life, have vanished beyond recall.'[13]

The Witness Paul

The earliest documents concerning Jesus are the writings of Paul. Paul came from a strict Jewish family, and had acquired Roman citizenship through his father, who had paid a high price for it. This permitted him to change his original Jewish name, Saul, to Paul (Paulus). Belonging to the patrician class, he was brought up in the strict Pharisaic tradition. He received an extensive and thorough education, gained an excellent knowledge of the Greek language, and was also widely read in Greek poetry and philosophy. At the age of about eighteen or twenty (after Jesus' Crucifixion), he went to Jerusalem and devoted himself to intensive theological studies as a student of Gamaliel I. He then became a fanatical zealot, narrow-minded, straightlaced, a strict adherent of the law, and a most vehement opponent of the early Christian sects whom he saw as an obstacle to his professional progress. Paul even went so far as to apply to the high priest for special permission to persecute the followers of Christ beyond the city limits of Jerusalem, hoping that the great zeal he intended to display in carrying out this task would also make an impression upon the religious hierarchy. Then, near Damascus, he was suddenly overwhelmed by the powerful aura of Jesus and his teachings, struck too by the realization of the undreamed-of potential afforded by his position. He became intoxicated by the idea that he might take up the role of spiritual leader over a gigantic movement of the future.

As with Jesus and the apostles, there is hardly a single historical text about Paul himself. Everything we know about him comes almost exclusively from the letters (epistles) attributed to him and the Acts of the Apostles, and these tend to have a decidedly tendentious slant, are forgeries in part or in full, or are patched together from a few genuine text fragments. The letters to Timothy and Titus, and the letter to the Hebrews are thought to be entirely spurious. The authenticity of the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, and the second letter to the Thessalonians, is hotly contested.

What is called Christianity today is largely a teaching of precepts artificially created by Paul, and should more correctly be called Paulinism. The religious historian Wilhelm Nestle makes the point by saying, '"Christianity" is the religion founded by Paul; it replaced Christ's Gospel with a Gospel about Christ.'[14]

In this sense, Paulinism corresponds to the misinterpretation and falsification of Christ's actual teachings in a manner initiated and organized by Paul. It has long been accepted by theological research that the Christianity of the organized Church, with its central tenet of salvation through the vicariously sacrificial death of Jesus, is based on a misinterpretation. 'All the beautiful aspects of Christianity can be traced to Jesus, all the not-so-beautiful to Paul', said the theologian Overbeck.[15] By grounding the hope of salvation firmly on the expiatory death of God's first-born, Paul was actually taking a retrograde step back to the primitive Semitic religion of prehistoric times, when every father was obliged to give up his first-born in bloody sacrifice.

Paul also paved the way for the later ecclesiastical doctrines of original sin and the divine Trinity. As long ago as the early eighteenth century, the English statesman and philosopher Lord Bolingbroke (1678–1751) could distinguish two completely different religious faiths in the New Testament: that of Jesus and that of Paul.[16] So too Kant, Lessing, Fichte and Schelling also sharply differentiate between the teaching of Jesus and what the 'apostles' made out of it. Many highly reputable modern theologians have since come to support and defend these observations.

Paul, the impatient zealot, markedly different from the original apostles, the 'epitome of intolerance' (as the theologian A. Deissmann describes him[17]), opened up deep rifts between 'true believers' and 'non-believers'. Paul placed little emphasis on the actual words and teachings of Jesus, but was preoccupied with his own teachings. He put Jesus on a pedestal and made him into the Christ figure that Jesus never intended to be. Today a profound new understanding of Christianity is possible by rejecting all that is obviously bogus, and by turning to the true, undiluted teachings of Jesus and the real essence of religious faiths. That we still can come to such a new understanding perhaps makes it easier to forgive Paul his distortions, for it may be that without Paul and his fellow fanatic zealots, no knowledge of Jesus would have been handed down at all.

The theologian Grimm put it in a nutshell: 'However deeply these teachings may have become ingrained in Christian thought, they still have nothing to do with the real Jesus.'[18]

Conclusions

The known sources evidently cannot provide any detailed or fundamental information abiout the historical person who was Jesus. Such sources as the documentation discovered by Nicolai Notovitch in Ladakh may, therefore, fill an extremely important gap in what is known about the life of Christ, for which there are otherwise no historical records. Nevertheless, such an astounding discovery – which instantly sheds light on some of the deepest shadows of the 'Christian' religion – would seem to have no relevance at all unless it is viewed in the context of the latest results provided by the most objective and extensive historical research, freed of all institutional dogmatism. Scientific research and scientific freedom are both required if a picture of the human Jesus is to gradually come together, true to life.

Perhaps it is only possible today to learn who Jesus was and what he really wanted, by studying the tradition he inspired, the results of his teachings, his lofty morals, and his profound ethical and spiritual nature.

What Albert Schweitzer said in 1913 is more valid today than ever: 'Modern Christianity must always be prepared to face the possibility that the historicity of Jesus could be revealed at any time.'[19] And Rudolf Bultmann said, 'It would not surprise me in the least if they were now to find Jesus' bones!'[20]

My Travels in the Himalayan Mountains

In 1973, a short report appeared in a major German weekly[21] outlining how an Indian professor was claiming in all seriousness to have found the tomb of Jesus Christ in India. The article was even accompanied by photographs showing the alleged tomb. The professor bluntly declared that Jesus not only spent his youth in India, but survived the Crucifixion by means of a technique, before returning to India. There he lived as an itinerant teacher until he died at a ripe old age, and his body was interred in the Kashmiri capital, Srinagar.

This was a truly amazing claim – and the journal that dared to publish it was duly swamped with thousands of letters full of invective and virulent protests. Some letters, however, contained

interested enquiries from more open-minded people who had always suspected there was something of the pious fairytale in the old versions of the virgin birth, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

It seems most surprising that none of the sceptics ever followed up the question of where Jesus could in fact have been buried – because although the various miracles Jesus is supposed to have performed can be explained away one way or another, it is quite impossible for the body of Jesus simply to have risen up into the air, being 'carried up into heaven' as Luke (24:51) puts it. Moreover, there is no room for physical matter in the spiritual domain.

After years of study during which my university professors could come up with nothing but unsatisfactory, not to say evasive, answers to my queries on the historical figure of Jesus, I decided that once I had finished my course as a religious teacher I would myself go to India to carry out my own research. Accordingly, I flew via Egypt to India early in 1979, and landed in Bombay. From there I went on by train and bus to the Himalayan foothills at Dharamsala, where the Dalai Lama had resided since his flight from Tibet in 1959. My intention was to ask him respectfully for a letter of introduction to the abbot at the Hemis monastery, a letter that would also grant me permission to look at the manuscripts about which Notovitch had written almost one hundred years previously. After having had to wait four days for an audience, I finally received the precious document, complete with the signature of His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama. I continued my journey by road to Kashmir, where I heard that the famous mystery plays that Notovitch had also described were to be performed a few days later. The festival, known to the Tibetans as *Cham* or *Setchu*, honours the Buddhist saint and prophet Padmasambhava, and takes place from the ninth to the eleventh day of the fifth month in the Tibetan calendar.

Today it is possible to reach Leh, the capital of Ladakh, in relative comfort by taking a two-day bus trip over the outlying ranges west of the Great Himalaya. When I eventually arrived at Hemis, the festival was already in full swing. There was a huge crowd in which, although the country had been opened to foreigners only five years before, a large number of Western tourists were evident. I had no wish to make my presence or purpose known while that hubbub was going on, so I went back to Leh, where I let three weeks pass before I returned once again to Hemis.

Hemis is the largest, richest, and most important abbey in

Ladakh. Its name is derived from the Dardic[22] word *hem* or *hen* (Sanskrit *hima* 'snow'), which tends to suggest that there was a settlement here prior to the present Tibetan culture.

Patience and perseverance are important virtues that foreigners must prove themselves to possess, so I received little attention to begin with. I joined the monks in the kitchen, which looked rather like a medieval alchemist's laboratory, where I drank the salted butter tea and waited. As evening approached, a monk, gesturing silently, showed me a small room in which I could sleep. During the following days, I was left mostly to my own devices, and I spent the time roaming through the dim passageways of the monastery, going for long walks in the countryside, and only rejoining my friends in the kitchen when I felt the pangs of hunger. On the morning of the fourth day of my stay in the monastery, a young monk appeared in my cell and motioned me to follow him. I was led through dark corridors and up steep wooden steps, into the upper regions of the monastery that I had not visited up till then. At last we came to the roof of the grand temple building. On a large terrace under the shelter of a projecting gable over the doorway to the topmost room of the complex, an assembly of monks was sitting around an imposing table. A dignified middle-aged monk seated at the far side of the table then addressed me in almost impeccable English. It was Nawang-Tsering, the secretary and interpreter of the abbot, who explained that His Holiness, the Dungsey Rinpoche, had heard of my interest and wished to speak with me.

While waiting for my audience, I learned from Nawang-Tsering that the former abbot of Hemis, who was also the head of the Duk pa Kagyu pa sect of Tibetan Buddhism, had been missing since the invasion of Tibet by Communist Chinese troops. The abbot, who at the time had been engaged in higher studies in his native Tibet, refused to leave his homeland without his parents, unwilling to abandon them to an uncertain fate, and was then himself not allowed to leave. After a while, the Communist government prohibited all correspondence with him, and the last anyone had heard of the High Lama was that he was a prisoner in a labour camp.

After fifteen years during which no further news of him had been heard, the abbot was declared dead, and a replacement sought in the form of a young reincarnation. Six years after the presumed time of death, the lamas lighted on a two-year-old boy who lived near the mountain town of Dalhousie (Darjeeling) in

north-eastern India, and who was duly consecrated as Drug pa Rinpoche in 1975 at the age of twelve. The boy's mentor was the old Dungsey Rinpoche, and the years between his discovery and his consecration were spent in intensive studies and instruction.

Among the monks I could not help noticing a tall man of about thirty years of age, who was clearly not of Tibetan origin since he had the facial features of a Westerner. It turned out that the young man was an Australian, had already been living at the Hemis monastery for several years, and spoke fluent Tibetan. He showed some interest in my research. When I was finally summoned to the audience, the Australian accompanied me to serve as my interpreter for the Holy One, who spoke only Tibetan. We entered a magnificently decorated low-roofed room, in which a venerable old man was sitting in the pose of a Buddha on a small throne. In front of him was an ornate silver teacup upon a little stand. After bowing to him with folded hands, I was permitted to sit before him on the carpet. My gaze was met by a pair of alert and flashing eyes that radiated goodness and wisdom, set in a smiling face adorned with sculptured wrinkles and a thin white beard. I showed him my letter of introduction, and attempted to convey to him how important these texts could be for the whole of Christendom.

With an understanding smile, the wise lama instructed me first to find the Truth for myself, before attempting to convert the whole world. The Australian translated only a fraction of what the lama told me. Finally, the old man informed me that the scriptures in question had already been looked for, but nothing could be found.

This piece of news struck me like a bolt from the blue, and in some shock and disappointment I took my leave. The lama's words might mean that the monastery would keep its precious secret for many years yet. But later I managed to discover that an old diary dating from the nineteenth century was located in the Moravian Church Mission in Leh, in which the missionary and Tibetan scholar Dr Karl Marx had mentioned Notovitch's stay at the monastery in Hemis.

On my return to Leh I immediately searched out the Moravian Mission, founded by the German order of lay brothers back in 1885.

Zealous Christian missionaries had come to Tibet long before then, though. Capuchin monks repeatedly visited Lhasa from as early as the fourteenth century, in the hope of converting Tibetans

to Christianity – an endeavour that was not to be blessed with success. When the Christian missionaries told the Tibetans that Christ had sacrificed himself on the Cross for the redemption of humanity, and finally rose again to life, the Tibetans accepted the entire story as something they already knew all about and exclaimed enthusiastically, 'It was he!' The pious Buddhists were completely convinced that Christ was an incarnation of Padmasambhava. The missionaries came to the conclusion that they had better stop trying to convert the population, not because they encountered too much resistance but, on the contrary, because their teachings were interpreted as confirmation of the teachings that had been proclaimed by Sakyamuni, Padsambhava, and other Buddhist saints.[23] Today there are fewer than 200 Christians in the entire population of Ladakh.

Father Razu, the director of the Christian Mission, a Tibetan by birth, received me cordially and, over tea and fresh pastries, told me the history of the Mission. But he could not show me the precious diary that was the real reason for my visit, because it had mysteriously disappeared three or four years earlier. A delegation of the Moravian Church from Zurich had been staying in Leh at the time, and the grandson of the celebrated Dr Francke, Dr Marx's partner, had also spent some time in the house. The friendly priest had no explanation for the book's disappearance, but he recalled that a certain Professor Hassnain from Srinagar had taken some photographs of the relevant pages many years before. Hassnain was the professor who had supplied the reporter of *Stern* magazine with information for the report that appeared in 1973.

After making further efforts to trace the missing diary at the municipal library and the library of the nearby village for Tibetan refugees, Chaglamsar, I resolved to end my stay in the 'lunar landscape' of Ladakh and to travel back over to the idyllic 'Happy Valley' of Kashmir. Near the village of Mulbek there is a bas-relief sculpture of Maitreya, the Saviour of the Buddhists whose future coming was promised by Sakyamuni, chiselled into a vertical wall of rock, a full twelve metres high (Plate 5). The name *Maitreya* is related to the Aramaic *meshia* – the *Messiah* that the Jews continue to hope for as their Saviour.

Kashmir is sometimes called the Switzerland of India because of its fertile valleys and their large, smooth lakes and clear rivers, surrounded by green wooded mountains, lying at the foot of the 'roof of the world'. This paradise has attracted people from far-off regions ever since ancient times, and especially during the Golden

The Province of Jammu and Kashmir in Northern India.

Age of Kashmir, when pilgrims came to the green valleys from all over the world in order to study the teachings of Gautama Buddha at the feet of the celebrated scholars of Kashmir. Kashmir was regarded as the centre of Mahayana Buddhism, the seat of a school of the noblest spiritual values and cultural endeavours. The region's conversion to Islam has left only fragments of the once extensive monasteries, temples and teachings of the ascetics.

Despite its idyllic location, Srinagar is a noisy and turbulent city, humming with commercial activity. The city is spread between and over several lakes, on the left bank of the large Lake Dal, and is thus interlaced by a number of waterways that have given Srinagar the atmosphere of a Venice of the East. A considerable proportion of the population live in the houseboats that lie in great numbers on the canals of the old town, or moored to the banks of the lakes and beside the 'floating gardens'. The houseboats vary greatly in design and construction, from simple *dongas* to artistically carved and luxurious floating palaces that have every conceivable comfort and convenience – depending, of course, on the wealth of the owners.

A short distance out of town, on a small lake, I found bed and

board on an old but quaint little boat, which was to serve as my home for the whole season. From this boat it was possible to be paddled to any point in the city in small, covered taxi-boats, *shikaras*. A vast flotilla of boats run by the traders transported and delivered all the necessities of life. Even a small waterborne post office made daily rounds. Needless to say, it was very pleasant to stay in such an idyllic setting, and many Europeans and Americans were drawn to spend even longer periods of time in these houseboats, perhaps while learning Sanskrit, perhaps simply enjoying the feel of the place – at least until the outbreak of disturbances in 1989.

From my boat I could reach the modern University of Kashmir on foot in ten minutes, and I was to spend a great deal of time there, for this was where Professor Hassnain taught. He was the man I wanted to contact in Srinagar, and about whom I had heard so much.

Professor Hassnain is a scholar of international reknown, the author of several books, a visiting professor in Japan and the United States, the Director of the Kashmir Research Centre for Buddhist Studies, and a member of the International Conference for Anthropological Research in Chicago. In addition, until his retirement in 1985 he was executive director of all the museums, collections and archives in Kashmir, working from his office at the Ministry of Culture.

Once I had told him of my hopes and plans, he began with great enthusiasm to tell me about his own research, putting off all his other appointments until the next day. After several hours of lively conversation, he closed up his office and invited me to visit him at his home. Despite his important position, Professor Hassnain remains a modest man, friendly and congenial.

Over the course of our meetings, I subsequently learned all that he had managed during the past twenty-five years to discover about Jesus' stay in India. But all his evidence – facts, implications, associations, apparent connections – could be taken as no more than contributing to a dubious, if not absurd, hypothesis unless it is also seen in the light of the most up-to-date research into the life of Jesus. The professor's discoveries have first to be placed on a firm scientific footing, and the true origins and evidence of the teachings of Jesus revealed. Only then can the three most important questions be addressed:

Could Jesus really have travelled to India in his youth?

Could he have survived the Crucifixion (not fairly soon afterwards ascending to 'heaven')?

Could he actually have returned to India, to die in old age in Srinagar?

Without such preliminary investigation, anyone brought up in the Christian tradition might be pardoned for dismissing the story of Jesus' life in India with a pitying smile. It is hard indeed to kick against the current of almost two thousand years of deeply-rooted convention. All the same, just because a story has been told for two thousand years does not mean that it is true.

Chapter Three

MOSES AND THE CHILDREN OF GOD

The Origins of the Hebrews

Modern research is of the opinion that Abraham, the patriarch of the Hebrews, was in fact a historical person, and was born in the eighteenth century BC. According to the Old Testament Yahweh commanded him, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee' (Genesis 12:1). But where was the original home of Abraham's forefathers?

Genesis 29 tells how Abraham's grandson Jacob journeyed to his maternal uncle Laban's establishment in the land of the 'sons of the east'. Even more pointedly, in the book of Joshua the patriarchs of the people of Israel are said originally to have come from the east:

> Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor; and they served other gods.
>
> And I took your father Abraham from the other side of the flood, and led him throughout all the land of Canaan, and multiplied his seed, and gave him Isaac.
>
> (Joshua 24:2–3)

Several passages in Genesis indicate that Abraham's first home was in the region of Haran. According to Genesis 12:4, it was while Abraham was living in Haran that he was commanded by God to depart from his homeland. Later, Abraham sent his eldest servant back to Haran 'unto my country, and to my kindred', in order to find a wife for his son, Isaac (Genesis 24:4). Haran is generally assumed to have been the place in the Mesopotamian lowlands now called Harran or Eski-Charran (in modern Turkey).

There is, however, a small town in northern India called Haran, a few kilometres north of Srinagar (the capital of Kashmir), in which the remains of ancient walls have been excavated and dated by archaeologists back to long before the Christian era (Plates 7 and 8). Although it is no longer possible to reconstruct the wanderings of the nomadic Hebrew tribes in detail, there is some evidence to suggest that in around 1730 BC they began to make their way towards Egypt under the leadership of Jacob.

The Egyptian priest and historian Manetho reported that 'people of a peasant culture appeared unexpectedly from the east, boldly entered our country, and forcibly took possession of it, without encountering any serious resistance.' Murals in Egyptian burial chambers clearly depict these conquerors as having a light skin coloration and black hair.

The speech delivered by Stephen in his own defence, as quoted in Acts of the Apostles, provides a brief account of how Abraham, the patriarch of the Jews, was compelled to go to the land that the God of Glory wished to show him. He departed from 'the land of the Chaldaeans, and dwelt in Charran' (Acts 7:4), travelling via Mesopotamia. It is not inconceivable that the nomadic families led by Abraham named the place in north-west Mesopotamia, where they settled temporarily, after their own home town.

From Haran the group finally advanced to Canaan, where Abraham sired his son Isaac, who in turn fathered Jacob and Esau. Twelve sons were born to Jacob, who were to become the patriarchs of the Jewish tribes. Joseph, second youngest of Jacob's twelve sons, was sold by his jealous brothers into bondage in Egypt, where the Hyksos were in power at the time. In Egypt, Joseph rose to a position of great power as the second-in-command to Pharaoh himself. Soon after, when Canaan was afflicted by a famine, the eleven brothers of Joseph heard that 'there was corn in Egypt', and set off for that land. Joseph disclosed himself to his brothers, and had his father Jacob and the entire clan join him in Egypt, where they first settled in the province of Goshen – a Semitic settlement dating from this time and located on the north-eastern Nile delta has been fully documented. The Hebrews soon came to people the whole land, gaining wealth, influence and power.

The description 'Hebrew' was thus originally applied not to a national or ethnic group, but to any persons of no fixed abode and with few rights, whose fate was to serve the Egyptians as a form of cheap labour and later even as cheap forced labour, as is evident in

sources dating from the fourteenth and thirteenth centuries BC. The detailed account given in Exodus 1:11 – in which the ancestors of the Israelites are conscripted for the construction of the towns Pithom and Raamses – would strongly suggest that Ramses II (1290–24 BC) was the oppressive pharaoh responsible. It was at that time, or very shortly afterwards, that some of the Semitic tribes left Egypt under the leadership of Moses, in search of the land of their fathers, the land of milk and honey that had been promised by Yahweh.

Who Was Moses?

The name of the man who laid down the social and religious laws in ancient India was Manu.

The lawgiver of the Egyptians was called Manes.

The Cretan who codified the laws of the ancient Greeks – laws that he had learned in Egypt – was called Minos.

The leader of the Hebrew tribes and the promulgator of the Ten Commandments was called Moses.

Manu, Manes, Minos and Moses, foremost contributors to the world's humanity, all belonged to the same archetypal pattern. All four stood by the cradle of important civilizations of the ancient world. All four laid down laws and instituted a theocratic priestly society.

In Sanskrit, *manu* signifies a man of excellence, a lawgiver. When a civilization begins to develop, there are always certain people who are called to greatness; they are beloved by the populace and are extraordinarily efficient in everything they do. Instead of mere force of arms, which served as the highest law to primitive peoples, the power of these cultural and spiritual leaders is drawn from the one supreme Being, or God. Such men are endowed with an aura of mystery, and their human origins become transfigured. They are deemed to be prophets or messengers of God, for they alone can shed light on why and how things happen in the prehistoric past. In their skilled hands, every physical phenomenon is transformed to become a manifestation of a heavenly power, which they can summon or suppress at will. Conjurors ('magicians') in both Israel and India, for instance, certainly knew how to put a snake into a catatonic trance so that they could display it stiff as a rod or staff, before transforming it back to its original condi-

tion – a feat still performed by Indian fakirs.

And yet there is always a certain ambivalence in the role of such spiritual leaders. Literal adherents of the verses of Manu joined with the Brahmans (the most influential caste, the priests) to topple the social structure of the Veda, which finally led to society's hardening into a rigid caste system locked in a suffocating framework of laws and taboos. Moses was made to act out a similar despotic role in relation to the people of Israel, the 'children of God'.

The etymology of the name Moses is a matter of debate. In Egyptian, *mos* simply means 'child' (or literally 'is born', as in Thut-moses, 'Thoth is born'). According to the biblical derivation, based on Hebrew elements, the name derives from *mo* 'water' and *use* 'save', in reference to the legend of the baby Moses' being found in a floating basket of reeds (Exodus 2:10).

It is not possible to form a consistent picture of the historical person of Moses, for the tradition has left a number of unanswered questions. Historical research into the Old Testament has shown that Moses was clearly not the author of 'the five books of Moses' attributed to him. In fact the Pentateuch, in the form in which we have it today, was compiled from centuries of oral and written tradition. The lack of uniformity in overall vocabulary, the contradictions and repetitions, and the differences in basic theological tenets all constitute firm evidence that a variety of sources was used.

But even if much has been obscured by the passing of intervening millennia, it has at least been established that Moses was a genuinely historical figure. We can assume that he grew up in the royal court, was brought up by the priests, and attained such a high level of education that he became influential as an administrator in all departments of the state. Moses made use of a peculiar mixture of pure doctrine and curious magical practices – a mix apparently suffused with Vedic incantations as well as elements of Egyptian religious ritual. His intention was after all to proclaim the existence of the One God, the God of Israel, beside whom no other gods were to be worshipped. And he was obliged to resort to 'wonders' to lend weight to God's – as it coincided with his own – will. The official stance of the Church has been to reject Greek and Roman mythology as the religious roots of Christian belief, but the accounts of Moses have been accepted *in toto*, however difficult it may be to accept that the vengeful God described as a devouring fire is the same God of the New Testament.

Whoever opposed Moses in his quest for power was destroyed. Fire was the method used for such eliminations, and was frequent-

ly used also to demonstrate power – for Moses seems often to have resorted to illustrating his point in a rather incendiary manner. He evidently had a great variety of magic tricks at his disposal. Following his appearance before the wise men and sorcerers of Egypt (Exodus 7:8–13), Moses was accredited a great magician even among the ancient Greeks. In the early Christian era, apocryphal writings of magical content were composed to complement the Pentateuch, associating themselves with the authority of Moses. Editions of the 'Sixth' and 'Seventh Books of Moses', which came to light fairly recently, returned to the Egyptian tradition, offering a mix of spells, sorcery, magical incantations and texts containing esoteric doctrines of various backgrounds.

In his book *The Biblical Moses*[1], which appeared in 1928, Jens Juergens showed that Egyptian priests were able to make gunpowder and use it in fireworks or primitive flares as early as six thousand years ago. Research undertaken by the English archaeologist Professor Flinders Petrie[2] also proved that Moses wielded authority not only over the Egyptian temples, but also over the royal mines in the Sinai region – including therefore the sulphur mine at Gnefru, which had been under excavation since the fifth millennium BC. So Moses knew about the production of gunpowder through his priestly training, and the composition (sulphur, saltpetre and charcoal) was simple enough technically. When his subjects refused to attend to his words (and he did preach at some length, 'from morning unto even', Exodus 18:14), he could have called forth a 'devouring fire' that was guaranteed to have the desired effect.[3]

As the representative of his fiery God, Moses could give orders for anything he wanted, and if anyone proved reluctant to come up with the sometimes weighty contributions he demanded, a suitably impressive demonstration of his power was all that was needed to restore the peace – as happened on Mount Sinai (Exodus 19:1–25). When Korah and his clan rose in rebellion against Moses, 250 men were 'consumed by fire' (Numbers 16:1–35), and shortly afterwards no fewer than a thousand more perished in flames when they too revolted against Moses. On another occasion, two of Aaron's sons were experimenting in the tabernacle with a 'strange fire before the Lord, which he commanded them not', and were burned to death (Leviticus 10:1–7). It seems that even Moses may have suffered such severe burns in an explosion that he was obliged to wear a head-bandage (Exodus 34:29–35).

Moses is still very much regarded as the great lawgiver, but the

Ten Commandments in fact represent no more than a codified summary of laws that had been in force among the peoples of the Near East and India long before Moses' time. The same precepts are even to be found among the famous laws promulgated by the Amorite King Hammurabi of Babylon (1728–1686 BC) five hundred years earlier. All these laws were probably based on the millennia-old Indian Rig Veda.

Nor is Moses the originator of monotheism. The notion of a single invisible and almighty God, the Creator of the Universe, a Father of love and goodness, of compassion, sensibility and trust, had long already been in evidence in the Vedas and in the tradition that became the Nordic *Edda*. Zarathustra, founder of Zoroastrianism, also expressly proclaimed his God to be the One and Only.

In the papyrus of Prisse (dating from about one thousand years before Moses) God says of himself: 'I am the unseen One who created the heavens and all things. I am the Supreme God, made manifest by Myself, and without equal. I am yesterday, and I know the morrow. To every creature and being that exists I am the law.'

This One God without equal was referred to in Egypt as 'the nameless', 'the One Whose name cannot be spoken', long before Moses: *Nuk pu Nuk* 'I am who I am'. (Compare this with the account in Exodus 3:14, where God declares: 'I am that I am.')

There can no longer be any doubt that Moses actually existed. His 'miracles' are nonetheless for the most part based on much older traditions – for instance, on the legend of the ancient (originally Arab) god Bacchus, who was rescued from the water like Moses, who crossed the Red Sea on foot, who inscribed laws on stone tablets, whose armies were led by columns of fire, and from whose forehead shone rays of light.

The Indian epic called the Ramayana tells of the hero Rama, who led his people on a journey through the heart of Asia finally to reach India more than five thousand years ago. Rama, too, was a great lawgiver and a hero of extraordinary powers. He caused springs to gush forth in the deserts through which he led his people (cf Exodus 17:6), provided them with a kind of manna to eat (cf Exodus 16:3–35), and suppressed a virulent plague with the sacred drink *soma*, India's 'water of life'. Finally he conquered the 'promised land', Sri Lanka, after invoking a hail of fire to fall on its king. In order to reach Sri Lanka, he crossed the sea via a land bridge apparently exposed by the low tide at a place still known as the Bridge of Rama. Like Moses, Rama is also depicted with rays

of light streaming from his head (the flames of the enlightened one, Plate 13).

Zarathustra, like Moses, also possessed a sacred fire that he could put to use in various ways. According to the Greek writers Eudoxus, Aristotle and Hermodoros of Syracuse, Zoroaster (that is, Zarathustra) lived about five thousand years before Moses, and like him, was of royal blood, was taken from his mother, and was left exposed to the wild. In his thirtieth year he became the prophet of a new religion. Heralded by peals of thunder, God appeared to him robed in light, seated on a throne of fire on the holy mountain Albordj, encircled by flames. There, God bestowed on him His sacred law. Finally, Zoroaster likewise wandered with his followers to a remote 'promised land', and came to the shores of a sea where, with God's help, the waters parted so that His chosen people might cross the sea on foot.

Perhaps the most familiar episode in Jewish history begins with the emigration of the tribes of Israel from Egypt under the leadership of Moses, to search for another land in which to settle as a newly independent nation. The land of Goshen, in which the Israelites lived beforehand, has not yet been located beyond all doubt but must have been somewhere in the eastern part of the Nile delta. Passages in the Bible mention a change of pharaohs at the time, which would coincide with the expulsion of the Hyksos at the beginning of the 18th dynasty under Amasis I. The direct route from the Red Sea (Sea of Reeds) to Palestine was due northeast, but the Philistines were blocking the way there. Why Moses did not then take the route via Beersheba – the place where Jacob had set up a sanctuary, and rich in other patriarchal traditions – remains a complete mystery. Be that as it may, he took them all south instead. By the third month of the Exodus, the people had arrived at the Sinai massif. It was probably on the mountain now known as Jebel Musa ('Moses' mountain') that the fiery God Yahweh's impressive demonstration took place. According to biblical tradition, the Israelites remained there for eight months before endeavouring to move on towards the Promised Land. Their first attempt failed, however, and the people of Israel had then to wander in the wilderness for a further forty years, or so the Bible says (forty was a mystical figure simply representing 'a large number').

Reaching the valley of the River Jordan, Moses sensed that he was not long for this world (Deuteronomy 31:2). Realizing that it would not be given him to see his people to the end of their long journey, he reiterated the laws that were to be regarded as sacred

in the Promised Land, gave his final instructions, appointed men to offices to be taken up once the Jordan had been crossed, delivered a farewell speech, and at last climbed Mount Nebo to see 'the land of milk and honey' before he died. There he met his end (Deuteronomy 34:5) – but his place of burial remained a mystery, for '. . . no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day'. It is all the more surprising that Moses' grave should not be found for the Bible gives a very detailed description of the site, complete with place-names:

> And Moses went up from the plains of Moab unto the mountain of Nebo, to the top of Pisgah, that is over against Jericho . . . over against Beth-peor . . .
>
> (Deuteronomy 34:1, 6)

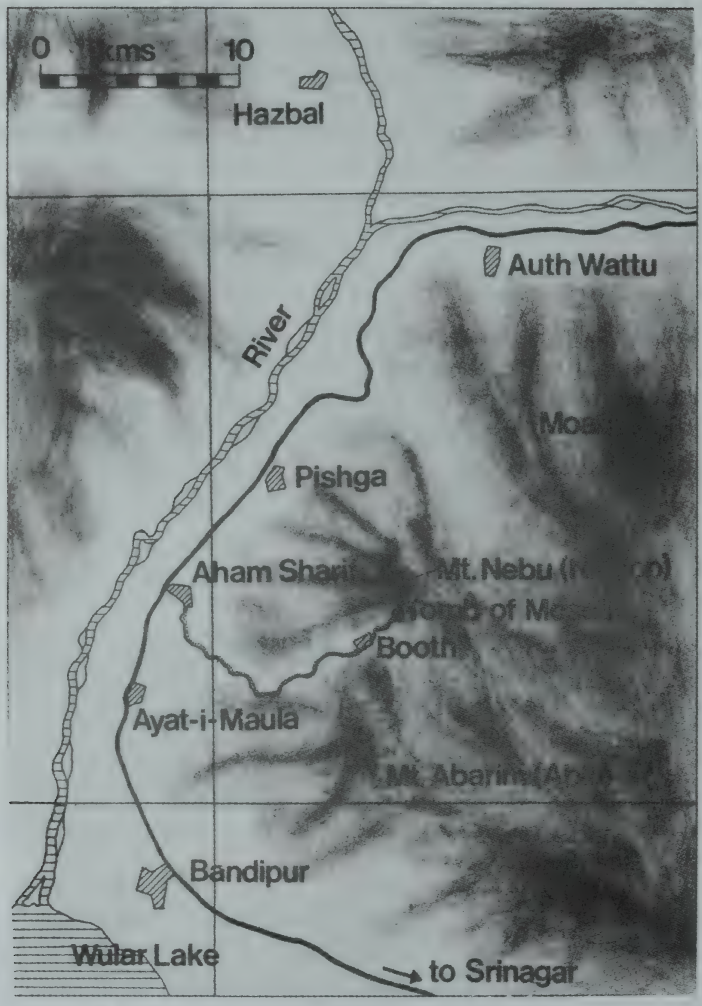
It seems equally improbable that the people of Israel would not have arranged for a place of burial worthy of their great saviour and leader: some fragmentary vestiges should still be visible somewhere. Some remains do indeed exist – but not in Palestine. They are in northern India.

The Tomb of Moses in Kashmir

The Bible names five landmarks in relation to Moses' burial site (Deuteronomy 34:1–7): the Plains of Moab, Mount Nebo (in the Abarim mountains), the peak of (Mount) Pisgah, Beth-peor, and Heshbon. The Promised Land beyond the Jordan had been expressly reserved for the children of Israel, and not for all Hebrews (Numbers 27:12). If it is possible to find the places mentioned in the texts, the true location of the Promised Land should also become clear.

The literal meaning of *Beth-peor* is 'place that opens out', as might refer to a valley that opens on to a plain. The River Jhelum in the north of Kashmir is called Behat in Farsi (Persian), and the small town of Bandipur at the point where the valley of the Jhelum opens out on to the broad plain of Lake Wular used to be called Behat-poor. Beth-peor, then, would seem to have become first Behat-poor and latterly Bandipur in the Sopore district 70 kilometres north of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir.

Some 20 kilometres north-east of Bandipur lies the small village of Hasba or Hasbal. This is the biblical Heshbon (Deuteronomy



Sketch-map showing the area around the 'Tomb of Moses': Mount Nebo, the peak of Mount Pisgah, the mountains of Abarim (Ablu/Abul), Beth-peor (Bandipur), Heshbon (Hazbal), and the Plains of Moab.

4:46), which is mentioned in connection with Beth-peor and Pisgah. On the slopes of Pisgah (now Pishnag), to the north of Bandipur, just 1.5 kilometres north-east of the village of Aham-Sharif, a natural spring yields water with curative properties. The valley and the plains of Mowu correspond to the Plains of Moab, ideal alpine pasture some 5 kilometres north-west of Mount Nebo. Mount Nebo is a single mountain in the Abarim range, and is always mentioned in connection with Beth-peor.[5] Mount Nebo, also called Baal Nebu or Niltoop, offers a splendid view of Bandipur and the entire highlands of Kashmir.

> And the Lord said unto him, This is the land which I sware unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, saying, I will give it unto thy seed. I have caused thee to see it with thine eyes, but thou shalt not go over thither.
>
> So Moses the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.
>
> And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day.
>
> (Deuteronomy 34:4–6)

All the five named landmarks are thus to be found in one well-defined location.

It is possible to go as far as the village of Aham-Sharif – about 12 kilometres from Bandipur – by car. From here, walking is the only way to reach the little village of Buth at the foot of Mount Nebo, climbing westwards for about an hour along a barely traceable path. The mountain's shape and its luxuriant vegetation are strongly reminiscent of hills in Europe. The path crosses several fields before finally reaching the small hamlet of Buth directly beneath Mount Nebo. The *wali rishi* is the official guardian of the tomb. He leads visitors to an area above the village that resembles an unfenced garden, and that contains a small cabin-like shrine. This modest hut serves as the tomb of an Islamic saint, Sang Bibi, a female recluse, and of two of her followers. To one side, in the shadow of the little wooden building, lies an unprepossessing stone column that rises about a metre from the ground and is almost completely covered by grass: this is the tombstone of Moses.

The *wali rishi* explains that the *rishis* have been reverently tending the grave for more than 2700 years. Everything fits the tradition: the grave is near the Plains of Moab, near the peak of Pisgah, on the mountain of Nebo, across from Beth-peor, and the site com-

mands a splendid view of a fresh and blossoming 'land of milk and honey', forever green, a true paradise. In the same vicinity, as in other parts of Kashmir, there are quite a few places with biblical names, in addition to one or two sites named Muqam-i-Musa, 'the place of Moses'. North of Pisgah lies the small village of Heshbon (Deuteronomy 4:44–49), which is today called Hasbal. And in Bijbihara, south of Srinagar, a place on the riverbank is still referred to as 'Moses' bath-place', where there is a magic stone called Ka-Ka-Bal or Sang-i-Musa ('Stone of Moses'). According to legend, the stone – about 70 kilograms in weight – is supposed to rise by itself and remain suspended at about one metre off the ground if eleven people touch it with one finger while chanting the magic spell 'Ka-ka, ka-ka'. The number eleven represents the tribes of Israel.

Another place named after Moses is near Auth Wattu ('Eight paths') in the Handwara district. The rocks at the confluence of the rivers Jhelum and Sind (this is not the Indus), near Shadipur north of Srinagar, are called Kohna-i-Musa, 'Cornerstone of Moses'. Moses is believed to have reclined on the rocks there. He is also said to have rested at Ayat-i-Maula (or Aitmul, 'Sign of God'), 3 kilometres north of Bandipur.

From Conquest to Exile

Following Moses' death, the twelve tribes of Israel gradually assumed control of Canaan under the leadership of Joshua, dividing the territory up between themselves by drawing lots in the thirteenth century BC. The whole process of gaining possession of the land and putting it to their own uses altogether took about 150 years. In the song of Deborah (Judges 5:8), the population is estimated at 40,000 people, governed by strict rulers and leaders – the 'Judges' – in accordance with the laws of Moses. But even the power of the Judges was not sufficient over the long term to transform volatile nomads into a united people. The Israelites needed a king to rule them with a firm hand, and Samuel, the last of the Judges, finally anointed Saul King of Israel at the end of the eleventh century BC. Not until the reign of King David (around the middle of the tenth century), however, did Israel finally become a single, united nation. And the nation's capital was Jerusalem, where the famous Temple was constructed during the reign of David's son, Solomon.

Solomon is renowned worldwide for his wisdom. But the biblical texts attributed to him were certainly written well after his time, and who the teachers were that imparted their wisdom to him is nowhere recorded.

In his book about the natural history of the region of Travancore in southern India (now the state of Kerala), Dr Mateer writes:

> There is a curious fact connected with the name of this bird which casts some light upon scriptural history. King Solomon sent his navy to Tarshish (1 Kings 10:22), from where it returned after three years bringing 'gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks'. Now the word used in the Hebrew Bible for peacock is *tukki*, and because the Israelites naturally had no name for these fine birds until they were first imported into Judea by King Solomon, there is no doubt that *tukki* is simply the old Tamil word *tokei*, the name of the peacock . . . Also, the ape or monkey in Hebrew is *koph*, the Indian word for which is *kapi*. Ivory . . . is abundant in southern India, and gold is widely distributed in the rivers of the Western coast. So the 'Tarshish' referred to was undoubtedly the Western coast of India, and Solomon's ships were the first East Indiamen.[6]

To this, with grateful acknowledgement, can be added the fact that apart from 'gold and silver, ivory, and apes, and peacocks', King Solomon and his friend King Hiram (he of masonic connotations) brought something else home with them from India: their 'magic' and their 'wisdom'. Other historians, including the famous expert on India Max Müller,[7] also trace the Hebrew name of the peacock and the monkey back to Indian origins.

According to the First Book of Kings (9:13), Solomon presented Hiram, the King of Tyre, with twenty towns, among them a place named Kabul (Cabul). But Kabul is the name of the capital of Afghanistan, formerly part of India.

Kashmir is still known among the local Muslim population as Bagh-i-Suleiman, the 'Garden of Solomon', and on a mountain that overlooks the city of Srinagar there stands a small temple called Takht-i-Suleiman, the 'Throne of Solomon'. According to an inscription, the 'new temple' was restored in AD 78 by King Gopadatta (also called Gopananda) on the foundations of an older, ruined building. Tradition has it that Solomon once visited the region, and that it was he who divided the mountain Barehmooleh in order to create a channel for the water that still flows into the large Lake Dal. Tradition likewise accredits him with the construction of the small temple building that retains his name[8] (Plate 9). The hill on which the Takht-i-Suleiman stands is sacred also to the

Hindus, and today its peak is crowned with a Hindu temple. Meanwhile the Buddhists of Ladakh believe the Throne of Solomon to have been the abode of the saint Padmasambhava, who brought Mahayana Buddhism to Tibet in the eighth century.

The Takht-i-Suleiman of Srinagar is not the only mountain throne of the biblical king in the huge expanse of land that stretches from Palestine to India. In north-western Iran, south of the town of Tabriz, set in an extraordinarily beautiful landscape comparable with the 'Happy Valley', there is another mountain which bears the same name. It is known particularly for its extensive ruins, the oldest sections of which date back to the early first millennium BC. In later times an important Zoroastrian temple of fire was erected here, and in the heyday of the Sassanians – the last pre-Islamic dynasty to rule Persia, from the fourth to the sixth centuries AD – the enormous palace of the Khosraus was built on the mountain. Oriental legend in general affords this mountain an important role. One of the three Wise Men (Magi) from the Orient was said to have died here after his return from Bethlehem, for example.

On Solomon's death in around 930 BC, his son Rehoboam succeeded him. But he had scarcely mounted the throne before a revolt broke out against the royal house, led by an exiled Ephraimite, Jeroboam, on the pretext of exorbitant taxation. The rebellion caused a secession: the kingdom was split into two parts. The ten tribes of the north formed an independent state under the name Israel, and made Jeroboam their leader. The two tribes of the south renamed their territory Judah, and continued to be ruled by the House of David. The two opposing brother states existed alongside one another for more than 250 years, as the total population grew to about 300,000.

The partitioned country, during what is often called the Age of the Two Kingdoms, suffered both internal strife and a number of invasions by more powerful neighbouring states. Eventually Israel, under the rule of Jehu and his descendants (845–747 BC), was first occupied for three years by the Assyrians, led by Sargon II, and finally overrun when its capital, Samaria, was captured in 722 BC. Judah held out for another hundred years as a vassal state paying tribute, until the Babylonian king Nebuchadnezzar finally took Jerusalem and destroyed it in 587 BC, so putting an end also to the state of Judah. The conquerors forcibly expelled the population. The deportation of the two tribes that made up the southern kingdom, Judah and Benjamin, was initially deferred for a time, but in due course Nebuchadnezzar had them hauled off into exile in

Babylon. After more than fifty years there, about half of all the deportees were permitted to return to their native land by Cyrus II, King of the Medes and Persians, in 535 BC.

The ten tribes that the Assyrians had deported some 130 years earlier from the northern state of Israel, who constituted very much the greater part of the Hebrew people, were overtaken by a very different fate. Most of them left for the East, and were never heard of in Palestine again. 'So was Israel carried away out of their own land . . . unto this day' (2 Kings 17:23). Numbering many thousands, they entered history as 'the ten lost tribes of Israel', and are even now often described as having altogether vanished without trace. But there are many clear indications that most of these 'lost tribes of Israel', after centuries of homeless wandering and administrative turmoil, finally arrived at their Promised Land, the 'land of the fathers' – northern India, where they have enjoyed peace and tranquillity to the present day.

The Flood in Kashmir

According to the chronology of the Bible, Abraham was a direct descendant of Noah, the man chosen by God to be the only person to survive the Flood with his family. The biblical account makes no reference to the origins of Abraham's father, simply listing a genealogy right back to Noah and the time when the great Flood occurred. A layer of clay two to three metres in breadth was actually discovered by archaeologists excavating in the area around Ur in Mesopotamia, and there were pottery fragments both above and below the clay. But the layer proves no more than that there once was a serious outbreak of flooding in the district around Ur.

A document in cuneiform from Nineveh describes the end of this catastrophe: 'All mankind had turned to clay. The land had become as flat as a roof.'

This layer of clay has been seen as evidence of the great Flood of the Bible, and it would fit very neatly into history as presented by the Bible were it not for the fact that archaeologists estimate the date of this flood at about 4000 BC. But the nomadic Semitic tribes and their flocks had certainly not reached the land of the two rivers by that time.[9] So they could not have survived this flood later to give their eyewitness testimony to it. The Flood of the biblical account must have been a different one.

The Flood actually represents something of a universal tradition, recounted in the mythology of almost every race. There have been many Ice Ages on the Earth, and no doubt catastrophic inundations arising from various causes have been equally numerous.

The Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh* was discovered around the beginning of the twentieth century in the ruins of the ancient library of Nineveh, written in cuneiform on tablets of baked clay. One of its heroes, Utnapishtim, the Sumerian Noah, is described as surviving a great flood caused by an arbitrary act of the gods. As in the Bible, a man builds a ship following a divine warning, and in this way survives a flood, which then destroys all life around him.

Alexander von Humboldt mentions the same legend among the Peruvians, and in one account of the Flood in Polynesia, the hero is even called Noa. More than 250 versions of the legend of the Flood have been recorded worldwide. But which is the Flood of the biblical account?

Because the Vedas of India are without doubt the oldest traditions in the history of humanity, it would seem logical to assume that the Vedic account of the Flood represents the very first Flood narrative to be passed down. The texts give a complex description of the event:

> The gods had decided to cleanse the world with an enormous flood, but Manu, the great seer and sage, was to be exempted in order to preserve the human race. The god Vishnu thereupon took on an Earthly incarnation for the first time as an avatar, in the form of the fish Matsya, and revealed himself to Manu on the bank of a river. The fish warned Manu that the Earth was soon to be submerged, and that everyone living on it would perish. He ordered the sage to build a ship to carry himself and his family, as well as the seven great *Rishis* (seers), the seeds of every plant, and one pair of each kind of animal. And he was also to take the Vedas, to ensure that the sacred texts were preserved. Just as the construction of the ship was completed, the great rains began, the rivers burst their banks, and Vishnu as the fish positioned himself at the prow of the boat, his horn above the water. Manu fastened a rope to the horn, and the fish pulled the ship safely through the raging elements until they found shelter on the peaks of the Himalayan mountains (cf Genesis 6–8).

The Vedic Flood lasted 40 days – a duration that coincides exactly with that described in the account of the Flood in Genesis.

The German word for the Flood is *Sintflut*, the first element of which has an obscure etymology. Most authorities generally derive

it from Old High German *sint*, meaning 'total', so Sintflut corresponds to 'total flood'. (Modern German has the alternative form *Sündflut*, a later corruption with the apparent, but not altogether irrelevant, meaning 'flood of sin'.)

But there is another possible etymology. *Sindhu* is the old name of the powerful river to which the subcontinent of India owes its name: the Indus.[10] In ancient times, 'India' referred to the lands beyond the Indus, including what are now Tibet and Mongolia. Later, the land on the southern and western side of the river as far as modern Iran were also included in the term 'India'.

Seen from the West, the Sindhu/Indus is the largest and most powerful river to be crossed on the way to India. It flows from north to south through what is now Pakistan, and out via a colossal delta into the Arabian Sea. 'The other side of the river', where Abraham came from,[11] might perhaps have been the land beyond the Indus, which serves as a natural barrier between India and the West.

The river also gave its name to the area called Sind, now the most southerly province of Pakistan, its capital at Karachi. The province is 140,000 square kilometres in area, and extremely fertile due to constant flooding, and is accordingly very well populated.

There is yet another river with the name Sindh in the province of Kashmir in northern India. This other Sindh is not as big as its better-known twin, but is certainly perhaps as important to a derivation for the German word Sintflut. This Sindh flows in the north of the Kashmir valley through the very area visible from Mount Nebo, from which Moses is said to have glimpsed the Promised Land before dying (Plate 15).

The source of this Sindh is not far from the Cave of Amarnath, which is especially sacred to the Hindus, and which attracts thousands of pilgrims for the night of the August full moon each year. Legend has it that the god Shiva initiated his consort Parvati in the mysteries of Creation (!) at this spot.

Three days of walking following the course of the river downstream brings a visitor to the village of Sonamarg, the 'Golden meadow', still a good 2,600 metres up. Notovitch passed through here before crossing over the 3500-metres-high Zoji-la Pass to the plateauland of Ladakh. The path from Sonamarg follows the river all the way down to Srinagar, 84 kilometres on, leading over ancient wooden bridges, past small villages set among lush green meadows and fruit trees bearing apricots, pears and apples. Artistically carved windowframes and decorated wooden roofs

bear witness to the prosperity of the region. The farther towards Srinagar, the more luxuriant and fertile the valley seems, vast terraces of rice and corn fields appearing on both sides. Finally, the valley opens right out at a place called Kangan.

All in all, Kashmir is like one enormous Garden of Eden – and its enormous marshy areas and large, shallow lakes are evidence of a gigantic flood in times long ago.

Kashmir, the 'Promised Land'

According to the Bible, Paradise – the place where humankind was created, lay to the East. 'And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed' (Genesis 2:8). The next few verses specify the geographical location of the Garden of Eden further by mentioning four rivers: 'And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads' (Genesis 2:10). In Mesopotamia, the land 'between the rivers', usually considered to be the Garden of Eden, there are only two rivers (as the region's name implies).

In contrast, northern India can boast five great rivers, all tributaries of the Indus (Sindh) that spread over a vast area, giving the region its name – the land of five rivers, the Punjab. Since the partition of India in 1947, the province has been divided between the two countries India (Bharat) and Pakistan. The five tributaries of the Indus to the west of the river are the Jhelum, the Chenab, the Ravi, the Beas and the Sutlej. One of the earliest attested civilizations in India was based in the Punjab region – the Indus culture, dating from around 3000 BC – and in Kashmir archaeologists have even found traces of a civilization going back 50,000 years.

The name Kashmir (Sanskrit *Kashmira*; Kashmiri *Kashir*) has been etymologically derived in at least three different ways.

Cush (Kush) was a grandson of Noah, whose descendants were to populate the Earth, giving their names to the countries in which they settled. The descendants of Cush have traditionally, and for more than two thousand years, been associated with Ethiopia, but Genesis also says of the waters flowing out of Eden, 'And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia' (Genesis 2:13). Virtually every single name in the Bible has been subject to considerable phonetic and

orthographic modification through the influence of other languages. So the 'Kush' of the Bible could easily have become 'Kash'. In Farsi (Persian), *mir* means something of value, a jewel; in Russian, *mir* is a region occupied by a community; and in Turkish, *Mir* is a title of respect.

Another interpretation centres on the Hebrew word *kasher* (also *kashir* or, as generally in English, *kosher*), which means 'approvable', especially in relation to food. According to Jewish law[12] only animals that have been ritually slaughtered and bled can be used for food. The Jews have always distinguished themselves from others by their dietary regulations, and so were called Kasher, as was the land that they came to inhabit. Later, Kasher turned into Kashmir. The Kashmiris of today stil call their country Kashir, and its inhabitants Kashur.

Yet another etymological possibility turns on the name of a Vedic seer, Kashyapa, who is said to have lived in the region in ancient times. Kashyapa means 'turtle' in Sanskrit. According to the cosmology of the day, the slightly rounded surface of the Earth bordered by the oceans was the back of a turtle swimming in water. In some Vedic texts the name Kashyap was also given to God the Creator, and 'Kashyap-Mar' – which became Kashmir, according to this derivation – would then mean 'the land of God'.

The Ten Lost Tribes of Israel

It was in the nineteenth century – as enthusiastic colonization spread apace – that the West began to take a more serious interest in the countries of the Far East, and reports began to filter in from several Western explorers describing their astonishment at encountering tribes all over the north-west of India who were clearly of Jewish descent.

The missionary doctor Joseph Wolff, for example, reported in his two-volume work *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843–1845*:[13]

> All the Jews of Turkistan assert that the Turkomauns are the descendants of Togarmah, one of the sons of Gomer, mentioned in Genesis 10:3 . . . The Jews in Bokhara are 10,000 in number. The Chief Rabbi assured me that Bokhara is the Habor, and Balkh the Halah, of 2 Kings 17:6, but that in the reign of Genghis Khan they lost all their written accounts.

> The tradition is an old one at Bokhara, that some of the Ten Tribes are in China . . . Some Affghauns claim a descent from Israel. According to them, Affghaun was the nephew of Asaph, the son of Berachia, who built the Temple of Solomon. The descendants of this Affghaun, being Jews, were carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, from whence they were removed to the mountain of Ghoree, in Affghaunistan, but in the time of Mohammed turned Mohammedans. They exhibit a book, *Majmooa Alansab*, or 'Collection of Genealogies' written in Persian . . . Captain Riley, I was surprised to find, looked upon the Affgauns as of Jewish descent.

And finally Wolff writes: 'I spent six days with the children of Rechab [Bani Arhab] . . . With them were children of Israel of the tribe of Dan, who reside near Terim in Hatramawt.'[14]

G. T. Vigne, a French travelling scholar and member of the Royal Geographical Society, in *A Personal Account of a Voyage to Chuzin, Kabul, in Afghanistan* wrote:[15]

> The father of Ermiah was the father of the Afghans. He was a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar, called himself Beni Israel and had forty sons. But a descendant in the thirty-fourth generation was called Kys, and he was a contemporary of the prophet Mohammed.

Dr James Bryce and Dr Keith Johnson note in their *Comprehensive Description of Geography*,[16] under the heading Afghanistan, that the Afghanis 'trace their lineage back to King Saul of Israel and call themselves "Ben-i-Israel".'

According to A. Burnes, the Afghan legend of Nebuchadnezzar confirms that the Israelites were transplanted from the Holy Land to Ghore, in north-western Kabul province. They remained Jewish until AD 682, when the Arab sheikh Khaled-ibn-Abdalla converted them to Islam.

To the works quoted above could be added a great deal more literary evidence that focuses on the settlement by the Israelites in the region of Afghanistan and surrounding territories. One of the most important contributions is *The Lost Tribes* by Dr George Moore,[17] who found many Hebrew inscriptions on archaelogical sites in India. Quite close to Taxila, now in Sirkap, Pakistan, a stone was dug up that bears an inscription in Aramaic, the language that Jesus spoke (Plate 17).

Latest research in the Pakistani part of Kashmir has brought to light thousands of rock inscriptions and pictures dating from the prehistoric, early Buddhist, and post-Christian periods. The discovery site is in the valley of the upper Indus, where the famous

caravan trail known as the Silk Route once passed. Among these inscriptions were some in Hebrew, dated by the researchers to the ninth century AD – the time when Islam was just beginning to penetrate through into India.[18]

The eleventh-century Arab historian Biruni wrote that at that time no foreigners were being allowed into Kashmir, other than Hebrews.

As early as in the nineteenth century, a society was founded in England that had as its aim the rediscovery of the ten lost tribes of Israel. It was called The Identification Society of London, and most works on the subject by British authors have been issued by the society. There is no need here to list the more than 30 authors and their works which prove that the Kashmiri population is of Israelite descent.

Of more immediate interest is the fact that well over 300 of the names of geographical features, of towns, regions and estates, and of tribes, clans, families and individuals in the Old Testament can be matched with linguistically related or phonetically similar names in Kashmir and its environs.

Name in Kashmir	*Name in the Bible*	*Bible Reference*
Amal	Amal	1 Chronicles 7:35
Asheria	Asher	Genesis 30:13
Attai	Attai	1 Chronicles 12:11
Bal	Baal	1 Chronicles 5:5
Bala	Balah	Joshua 19:3
Bera	Beerah	1 Chronicles 5:6
Gabba	Gaba	Joshua 18:24
Gaddi	Gaddi	Numbers 13:11
Gani	Guni	1 Chronicles 7:13
Gomer	Gomer	Genesis 10:2

and so on

Place in Kashmir	*(Province)*	*Biblical Name*	*Bible Reference*
Agurn	(Kulgam)	Agur	Proverbs 30:1
Ajas	(Srinagar)	Ajah	Genesis 36:24
Amariah	(Srinagar)	Amariah	1 Chronicles 23:19
Amonu	(Anantnag)	Amon1	Kings 22:26
Aror	(Awantipur)	Aroer	Joshua 12:2
Balpura	(Awantipur)	Baal-peor	Numbers 25:3
Behatpoor	(Handwara)	Beth-peor	Deuteronomy 34:6
Birsu	(Awantipur)	Birsha	Genesis 14:2
Harwan	(Srinagar)	Haran	2 Kings 19:12

and so on

The inhabitants of Kashmir are different from the other peoples of India in every respect. Their way of life, their behaviour, their morals, their character, their clothing, their language, customs and habits are all of a type that might be described as typically Israelite. Like present-day Israelis, the Kashmiris do not use fat for frying and baking: they only use oil. Most Kashmiris like boiled fish, called *fari*, eaten in remembrance of the time before their Exodus from Egypt – 'We remember the fish, which we did eat in Egypt freely' (Numbers 11:5).

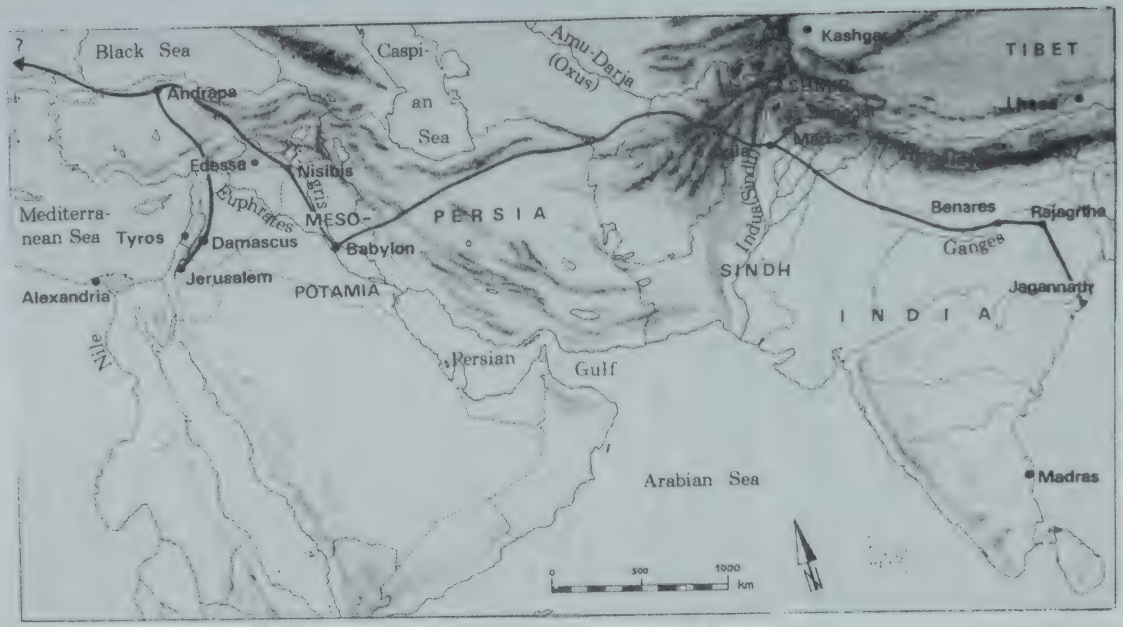
Butchers' knives in Kashmir are made in the half-moon shape typical of the Israelites, and even the rudders of the boat people (Hanjis) are of the similarly typical heart shape.

The men wear distinctive caps on their heads. The clothing of the old women of Kashmir (Pandtanis) is very similar to that of Jewish women, and like them they also wear headscarves and laces. Like young Jewish girls, the girls of Kashmir dance in two facing columns with linked arms, moving together forwards and backwards to the rhythm. They call their songs *rof*.

After bearing a child, a woman of Kashmir observes forty days' seclusion for purification; this, too, is a Jewish custom. Many of the older graves in Kashmir are aligned in an east-west orientation, whereas Islamic graves normally point north-south. A great number of such graves are to be found in Haran, Rajpura, Syed Bladur Sahib, Kukar Nagh and Awantipura. In the cemetery at Bijbihara, the place where the bath and stone of Moses are located, there is also an old grave that has an inscription in Hebrew.

Sixty-five kilometres to the south of Srinagar, and just a few kilometres from the 'Bathplace of Moses', is the Temple of Martand. This impressive building's outside walls, which date from the eighth century, feature carvings of a number of Hindu deities. But together with these parts of the structure that derive from more recent times, considerably older walls and ruins have been discovered, which have yet to be dated accurately, but which are clearly many centuries older than the Hindu temple built over them (Plates 21 and 22).

Could this perhaps be the temple that a man 'whose appearance was like the appearance of brass' showed to the prophet Ezekiel during the time of the Babylonian Exile (586–538 BC)? In fact the Temple of Martand does stand on a 'very high mountain' unknown to Ezekiel: a Himalayan peak. And at its side 'a spring' gushes forth, to flow into the Jhelum farther downstream (Ezekiel 40–43).



The Silk Route between the Far East and the Mediterranean allowed the brisk exchange of goods and philosophical ideas even in pre–Christian times.

Chapter Four

THE CHILDHOOD OF JESUS

The Wise Men's Star

In the Gospel According to Matthew, in the second chapter, we read:

> Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem,
>
> Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the East, and are come to worship him.
>
> (Matthew 2:1–2).

Had some extraordinary astronomical event really taken place that night there would also have been some mention of it in contemporary secular records. And in any case, any unusual conjunction of planets in the night sky, whenever reported, is simple enough to check up on mathematically today.

Even Johannes Kepler undertook such calculations. He thought that the star of Bethlehem might have been a nova that appeared as the result of a conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn in the year 7 BC. His idea of a nova (literally a 'new' star) was rejected as a workable theory by later astronomers. But the conjunction that Kepler thought was the cause of it has itself come to be generally accepted by many as the Bethlehem event. In the course of the year 7 BC, the conjunction of Saturn and Jupiter in the constellation Pisces occurred no fewer than three times. (Coincidentally, Pisces corresponds to 'Fish', and it was a fish that became a symbol for Christ and was a secret sign of recognition among the early Christian communities.) Such an encounter in this sign of the Zodiac occurs only once every 794 years: everybody who saw them must have been captivated for months by the impressive sight of the two planets in such close proximity as to appear in the night sky as a double star of great brilliance.[1]

In 1925 the Orientalist Paul Schnabel succeeded in deciphering a

cuneiform slate almost 2000 years old that had been found at the observatory at Sippar, on the Euphrates. It contained a careful description of the astronomical event of the year 7 BC – the great conjunction between the planets Jupiter and Saturn in the constellation Pisces.[2]

Towards the end of 8 BC, Jupiter and Saturn were visible only after twilight in the western sky, some 16° or so apart, Jupiter moving out of the constellation Aquarius and Saturn already in Pisces. In February of 7 BC, both planets disappeared in the rays of the sun and remained occluded for several weeks. The astrologers of the Middle East impatiently awaited the reappearance of Jupiter, expecting it to be an outstandingly spectacular occasion at dawn on the thirteenth of Adaru in the year 304 of the Seleucid era – or 16 March 7 BC. Thereafter they watched Jupiter move ever nearer to Saturn, until the two planets finally 'touched' at the end of the month of Airu (29 May 7 BC). This conjunction, at which both Jupiter and Saturn had an altitude of 21° in Pisces, separated by only 1° in declination and with precisely the same azimuth, was to recur twice more in the same year in much the same way, on 3 October and 5 December.

Both planets were visible from dusk until dawn, reaching their maximum altitude at around midnight. As the sun sank in the west, the planets rose in the east, and as they in turn vanished below the western horizon, the dawning sun reappeared in the east. At the beginning of the year, therefore, the pair of planets emerged from occlusion by the light of the sun (a heliacal rising), and at the end of the year they once more disappeared into the sun's rays (a heliacal setting). Every night of the year Jupiter and Saturn were visible, never leaving each other's company by more than 3°. Such a sight was not to be seen again in the Zodiacal sign of Pisces for another eight hundred years.

In the Gospel According to Matthew, the star is mentioned three times. The wise men first say, ' . . . for we have seen his star in the East . . .' The original Greek text, for 'East', uses the word *anatole*. Historical linguists have discovered that *anatole*, used in the singular, had a meaning of particular astronomical significance. It referred to the appearance of the Morning Star, a star (or planet) that preceded the sun at dawn, rising in the east shortly before sunrise. Used in the plural, the same word had a geographical connotation, and referred instead to the land of the East, the Orient. So three wise men could indeed have followed the celestial phenomenon from the east to the west.

The second reference to the astronomical event in Matthew's Gospel also bears a special meaning in Greek: 'Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared' (Matthew 2:7). The Greek verb meaning 'appeared' was also an astronomical technical term relating to the first appearance of a Morning Star in the east. Contemporary popular belief held that each person's 'own star' rose at the moment of his or her birth. What Herod's question implies is that the birth must have occurred a good while before. According to the Babylonian calendar, Jupiter had appeared to rise during the last month of year 304 of the Seleucid era. The year 305 (6 BC) began with the spring month of Nisannu, which also marked the beginning of the Jewish New Year. When the wise men arrived in Jerusalem, the conjunction between Jupiter and Saturn would have been well into its second year, and Jesus – probably born in 7 BC – would then have been almost two years old. It was presumably for this reason that Herod massacred all the children of certain communities up to the age of two.

What impelled these mysterious sages of the East (the Greek word *anatole* is in the plural here) to undergo the rigours of a journey that lasted many months, perhaps even two years on the outward leg alone, and that entailed such great sacrifice? Where did they come from, and why did they go on searching so persistently for a small boy? Traditional theology provides no solution to the question of who these 'three wise men' actually were.

Who Were the Three Wise Men?

In the ancient Greek text, the wise men are called *magoi* (from Old Persian *magus*). The Magi of the Bible story were first elevated to kingship in the sixth century by Caesarius of Arles. In the ninth century, these 'kings' were given the spuriously coined names Caspar, Melchior and Balthasar. The earliest sources do not actually specify how many Magi there were, but their number has been fixed at three ever since the days of Origen,[3] perhaps because there were three gifts given.

What is certain is that the Magi came on a long journey from the East, and that they were well versed in 'magical' practices, were expert astronomers, and were by no means poor.

This means that the story of the star's coming to a standstill

immediately over the stable of a rustic inn, in which a newborn infant was lying only a few hours old, is just religious myth. It is much more likely that the child, by then almost two years of age, was sought out and visited at the home of people who were aware of the divine stature of the boy. The circle evidently did not enjoy the favour of Herod, however, because when the king heard what the three were seeking, he was extremely shocked, and 'all Jerusalem with him'. Whether the child could perhaps have been seen as the messianic Saviour whose coming was awaited by the secret sects of Qumran, the Nazarenes and the Essenes, is a theme that is taken up later in this book. Nonetheless, it is now known that the monastery of Qumran, close to the Dead Sea, was deserted for ten years during the rule of Herod the Great – that is, that the mysterious and esoteric sect was proscribed for those years. Such an enforced ban could account for the king's wrath, and for his attempt to ensure that the child was killed.

Could the members of the forbidden sect perhaps have retained links with their brethren in India, with the lost tribes of the House of Israel?

The apocryphal *Gospel of the Nazarenes*[4] contains the following passage:

> When Joseph raised his eyes and looked out, he saw a group of travellers approaching, coming directly towards the cave; and he said, 'I will get up and go to receive them.' Immediately after going out, Joseph said to Simon, 'The people approaching would seem to be astrologers, for look how they are constantly peering up into the sky and talking among themselves. But they seem also to be foreign, for their appearance is different from our own; their clothing is very rich and their skin quite dark, and they are wearing caps on their heads, and their gowns look soft to me, and their legs are covered too.'

At this distance in time it is well-nigh impossible to prove that the Magi came either from Persia or from India. Yet it is absolutely amazing how much the story of the three wise men corresponds with accounts of the methods by which reincarnations[5] of great Buddhist dignitaries are located in Tibet after their demise, even to this day. The way in which such a search is carried out, following ancient and traditional ritual, is described in the present Dalai Lama's own accounts of his 'discovery' as a little boy,[6] and in the book by the Austrian Heinrich Harrer, who spent seven years at the court of the god-king in Lhasa.[7]

Just How Do You Locate a Reincarnation?

Shortly before his death in 1933, the thirteenth Dalai Lama transmitted some indications of the place and time of his next reincarnation. Every day his body was positioned in the Potala Palace, facing southward in the traditional seated posture. But one morning his face was seen to be turned to the east. And on a wooden pedestal a short distance north-east of the shrine on which his body was seated, a star-shaped fungal plant appeared in a sudden and mysterious manner. On receiving these signs, the head lamas performed a magic ritual during which they interrogated a monk who had been put into a trance, and whose charge it was to act as an oracle. The monk cast a white ceremonial scarf in an easterly direction, and strange cloud formations appeared to the north-east over Lhasa. But after this the lama magicians received no further signs for another two years. Finally, the acting head lama (the 'regent lama') was inspired to make a pilgrimage to the holy lake of Lhamoi Latso, near Ch' Khor Gyal, 144 kilometres away. Tibetans believe that the future is mirrored in the clear waters of this mountain lake. After days of preparatory meditation, the regent lama had a vision of a three-storey monastery with gilded roofs, alongside which was a small Chinese farmhouse with beautifully decorated gables and green roofing-tiles. Superimposed over this scene were the three Tibetan letters Ah, Ka and Ma. A detailed description of the vision was committed to paper and kept strictly secret. Full of gratitude for the divine instructions, and with complete confidence, the regent lama returned to Lhasa, and preparations were made in the palace for the forthcoming search.

Most important to these preparations were the pronouncements of the astrologers, without whose calculations no significant moves could be made at all. At last, in 1937, various expeditions were despatched from Lhasa to seek out the holy child according to the heavenly omens, in the direction indicated. Each group included wise and worthy lamas of highly distinguished status in the theocracy. In addition to their servants, each group took costly gifts with them, some of them from among the possessions of the deceased. The gifts were meant as tokens of worship for the new Dalai Lama, but also constituted a test by which the identity of the new reincarnation might be verified.

The dead Dalai Lama could theoretically be reborn many thousands of kilometres from his previous dwelling-place – and that, indeed, turned out to be the case with the fourteenth Dalai Lama.

The search led well beyond the borders of central Tibet into the district of Amdo in the region of Dokham, which was under Chinese administration. The birthplace of the reformer of Lamaism, Tsong Kapa, there were a number of monasteries in the area.

The expedition found several potential candidates, but none of them precisely matched the details of the vision or the astrological pronouncements. Finally, during the winter, near the village of Taktser, the team arrived at the three-storey monastery of Kumbum, ornate in its gilded roofs and adjacent to a charming little farmhouse with a turquoise roof and carved gables. It all tallied exactly with the regent lama's vision.

Two lamas of high rank disguised themselves as servants, and a young monk of their party played the role of their master. The disguise was meant to conceal the actual purpose of their visit for the time being, to avoid unnecessary commotion and allow the delegation to inspect the place in a tranquil atmosphere. The monks entered the house with two officials from the local monastery. The two high clerics – one of whom was Lama Kewtsang Rinpoche from the monastery of Sera in Lhasa – were led into the kitchen in their assumed role of servants, while the other monk was shown into the main room. In the farmhouse kitchen, the children of the family were playing, and as soon as the disguised Lama Rinpoche took his seat in the room a little two-year-old boy rushed forward and plumped himself down on the lama's lap. The revered monk was wearing a string of prayer-beads that had belonged to the deceased Dalai Lama, and the boy seemed to recognize it and tugged at it as though he wanted to have it. The lama promised to give the boy the beads if he could guess who his visitor was – whereupon the boy immediately gave the answer '*Sera-aga*', 'The Lama of Sera' in the local dialect! The boy's ability to recognize a lama disguised as a servant was surprising enough, but that he somehow knew that the lama came from Sera astonished even these monks, who were accustomed to miraculous events. The lama then asked the boy what their alleged 'master' was called, and he replied 'Lobsang'. The servant's name was indeed Lobsang Tsewang.

The high-ranking lamas spent the entire day observing the child, restraining themselves as best they could from according him the profound reverence that they were convinced was his due, for they were quite sure that they had at last found the reincarnation. But they left the next day, to return with all the other mem-

bers of the expedition a few days later. It was only when the child's parents espied the procession of high dignitaries in full costume approaching their humble home that they realized that their son must be a reincarnation. In the neighbouring monastery of Kumbum a particularly holy lama had recently died, and the farmers believed that their darling boy might be his reincarnation. One of the farming couple's elder sons had in fact already undergone a test to investigate whether it was he who was the reincarnation.

It is not unusual for such reincarnated children to remember objects and people known to them from their previous life. Some are even able to recite scriptures that they have not been taught. In the isolated tranquillity of Tibet there has always been an abundance of evidence that former lives may overlap into the present. In the West, however, such accounts rarely surface because Westerners tend to belittle the very idea that a dead person may be reborn in a new body.

The four chief *Bonpos* of the delegation from Lhasa then proceeded to carry out the prescribed tests. First they offered the child two almost identical strings of black prayer-beads, one of which had belonged to the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Without hesitation, the child chose the correct one, hung it around his neck, and danced gaily around the room with it. The test was repeated with several more strings of precious prayer-beads. Then the delegation offered the boy two different ritual drums – one large and ornate, decorated with gold, and a much plainer drum that had once belonged to the deceased Dalai Lama. The boy took the plainer of the drums, and went on to play upon it, beating out a rhythm in precisely the way these drums are used in religious ceremonies. Finally, two walking sticks were presented to the child, and the boy first touched the wrong stick, paused, considered both sticks for a short while, and finally chose the stick that had belonged to the god-king. The spectators, who had been surprised at the boy's apparent hesitancy, were at once told by the Rinpoche how the second stick had also been used for a time by the thirteenth Dalai Lama before he gave it to Lama Kewtsang.

(There is a clear parallel here between such a presentation of the deceased king's precious possessions and the costly gifts brought by the Magi from the East to the boy Jesus. It is also obvious that a child must have attained an age of at least around two years before being ready for such a test.)

To these proofs was added an interpretation of the three letters that the regent lama had seen in his vision. It was surmised that

the first letter, Ah, stood for Amdo, the district in which the boy was found. The two letters Ka and Ma were taken to refer to a small lamasery on the mountain above the village of Taktser, Ka(r)ma Rolpai Dorje – where the thirteenth Dalai Lama had stayed some years before when travelling back from China. At the time, the thirteenth Dalai Lama's visit had created something of a sensation over the whole region, and among the people blessed by their god-king was the father of the new reincarnation, then just nine years old. Moreover, the former Dalai Lama was said to have gazed at the farmhouse where his reincarnation was later discovered, and to have remarked somewhat wistfully how beautiful and serene the place was. It is also reported that the Dalai Lama had left behind a pair of boots in the small lamasery – an action that might, in the event, be said to hold a certain foresighted symbolism.

The delegates were totally satisfied with every confirmatory detail: the reincarnation had been found. Announcing the discovery and appending the evidence, they sent a coded telegram to Lhasa via China and India, and by return received instructions that everything must henceforward be organized with the utmost secrecy in order not to jeopardize matters by getting on the wrong side of the Chinese authorities. In particular, because the search had taken place on Chinese soil it was essential to pull the wool over the eyes of the Chinese officials to get the young king out of their charge. The governor of the province, Ma Pufang, was told that the boy was to be taken to Lhasa because he was one of many possible successors to the deceased Dalai Lama. Ma Pufang first demanded 100,000 Chinese dollars for releasing the child, and when he found this sum readily forthcoming demanded a further payment of 300,000 dollars. The worst the delegation feared was that if they were to admit having found the true god-king, China might insist on sending some troops with him to Lhasa 'for his protection'.

Again the parallels with the similar situation in Jerusalem two thousand years ago are striking: there the divine child had to be smuggled out of the country in order to avoid the Roman governor of the province, Herod. 'Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth' (Matthew 2:16).

For security reasons, all correspondence between Amdo and Lhasa was conveyed by couriers, which always took several months. So it was a further two years before the caravan with the delegation, the child and his family, were finally able to set out for

Lhasa. The trek to the border of central Tibet lasted many months, but when they arrived it was to find a cabinet minister and his entourage there to welcome them, and to find the choice of the Dalai Lama confirmed in a letter from the acting regent lama. It was not until that moment that the parents of the boy realized that their son was no less a figure than the new ruler of all Tibet.

Very comparable with this well-attested story of how the Dalai Lama was located is another case that happened quite recently.

Tibetan scroll pictures, gilded statues of Buddha and fresh flowers adorn the bedroom of the little Spanish boy Osel. He sits on velvet cushions embroidered with brocades and wears a splendid little jacket. Tibetan Buddhists around the world are convinced that the two-year-old Osel Hita Torres is actually the reincarnation of the Lama Thubten Yeshe, who died in 1984 after a heart attack. During his lifetime he founded thirty-one Buddhist centres in the Western world, including one in Spain, the country in which he had most enjoyed staying.

Near the city of Granada is the Buddhist centre called Osel Ling ('Town of the little light'), which is run by Paco and Maria Hita, a bricklayer and a postage-stamp dealer, who are the parents of little Osel. The boy was barely seven months old when Lama Zopa, a disciple of Thubten Yeshe, recognized him as the reincarnation of his departed mentor. Lama Zopa had been given the task of searching for the departed soul by the Dalai Lama, after Thubten Yeshe had appeared to his disciple as a child in a dream. The Dalai Lama himself expressed a wish to see the boy, so Paco and Maria travelled with Osel to India, where he was set the prescribed tests. In one of them he was shown a number of strings of prayer-beads, some very precious, and confidently chose the one that had previously belonged to Lama Thubten Yeshe.

On 19 March 1987, the Spanish boy – then two years old – was ceremonially enthroned as a reborn lama.

Since then, Osel has attended a monastic school in Nepal. His education will take forty years altogether, and only then can he assume the role of abbot of the Nepalese monastery of Kopan as successor to Yeshe. Osel is the first reincarnation of recent times to be found outside the usual areas of Buddhist culture.

The Flight to Egypt

After the wise men of the East had located the child Jesus near Jerusalem, his father Joseph received an instruction from God: 'Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him' (Matthew 2:13). The route of the flight would probably have taken them via Hebron to Beersheba, and from there across the desert to the Mediterranean. Only here, on the border of Egypt, were they safe. At the time, some one million Jews were living in Egypt – two hundred thousand in Alexandria alone. By custom the country had for some time been a haven for Jews, who lived in what were virtually colonies complete with synagogues, schools and everything else to make an expatriate feel at home.

The massacre of the innocents perpetrated by Herod and referred to in the Gospels is confirmed by a report written during Jesus' lifetime by members of the sect of Essenes. The sect was apparently the object of Herod's oppression, and was obliged to operate in secret in their own country. 'The next king was an upstart not of the priestly class, an audacious and godless person. He killed both old and young, and the entire land was filled with a terrible dread of him' (Ass. Mos. 6:22).

Professor Hassnain once told me that Buddhist missionary schools – *viharas* – existed in Alexandria even before the Christian era. My Chinese Buddhist handbook defines a *vihara* as a place 'which is either an academy, a school or a temple, and serves in the study or practice of Buddhism. Such buildings were ideally constructed with red sandalwood (chandana), consisted of thirty-two rooms, each of which were eight "tala-trees" high; with a garden, a park, a bathing pool and tea kitchen, amply furnished and adorned with wall-hangings, and well stocked with provisions, beds, mattresses, and all the necessary comforts.'[9] It is thus quite conceivable that Jesus was introduced to the wisdom of Eastern philosophy from early childhood by Buddhist scholars in Alexandria. Thorough academic instruction of this kind could go quite a way towards explaining, after all, how Jesus was able to astonish the priests in the Temple of Jerusalem with his wisdom as a mere twelve-year-old boy. 'And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers' (Luke 2:47).

In those days, about twelve was the age at which it was customary for a boy to get married. Jesus succeeded in avoiding this fate

too. He was now old enough to continue his studies in the place that might well have been the home of his real spiritual fathers – in India.

Not until ten full years had passed since the death of the hated usurper Herod (which occurred shortly before Passover in the year 4 BC) was Jesus able to return to the land of his birth without danger:

> But when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt,
>
> Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel: for they are dead which sought the young child's life.
>
> And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel.
>
> But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither [Archelaus was Ethnarch (local governor) of Judea and Samaria from 4 BC to AD 6 – that is, until the time Jesus was twelve or thirteen years old]: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:
>
> And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.
>
> (Matthew 2:19–23)

Chapter Five

EASTERN WISDOM IN THE WEST

The Expansion of Buddhism

The worldwide spread of Buddhism, even before the pre-Christian era, can be fundamentally attributed to the initiative of one of the greatest rulers not only in the history of India but in the history of the world: the Emperor Ashoka, who lived from about 273 to 232 BC. Ashoka was one of the most influential figures, politically, ethically and culturally, of all time. During his reign, the first of the wars between Rome and Carthage spilled over into Europe. Having experienced for himself the obscenities of war while he was a young man, the Emperor determinedly renounced violence, devoting himself instead to the peaceable teachings of Buddhism.

Many of his beneficent laws and decrees have come down to us today preserved in the form of individual inscriptions on the walls of buildings and temples. In one decree, the Emperor give orders that every living being is to be protected: 'All people are my children. Just as I would wish my children to enjoy every blessing and joy that are to be found in heaven and on earth, so I do wish the same for all people.'

Ashoka built no fewer than 84,000 Buddhist monasteries in India, and constructed hospitals for both human and animal patients throughout his enormous empire. He arranged for the convening of the second Buddhist World Council in Pataliputra (corresponding to modern Patna), the capital of his empire, in which thousands of monks took part. And in accordance with the ordinances of Buddha, Ashoka set up the intricate organization by which Buddhist teachings were spread abroad, incidentally sending something of the spirit of India to remote countries at the same time. A supreme patron of proselytism, he despatched Buddhist missionaries not only to all the towns of India and Sri Lanka, but

also to Syria, Egypt and Greece via the Silk Route.

The spreading of the teachings of Buddha was one of the obligations that Sakyamuni (the 'sage of the Sakyas', Buddha) himself had imposed on his following:

> Go, O monks, and travel afar, for the benefit and welfare of many, out of compassion for the world, to the advantage and welfare of gods and of mortals. And let not two of you take the same path. Preach the teaching that leads to good . . . Preach it in spirit and in letter. Show in your perfect sinlessness how the religious life should be lived.

The monks lived as beggars, totally reliant on the alms of the ordinary people. They owned nothing more than the clothes on their backs. Their life was one of renunciation, but there was no need for ascetic austerity. The principal occupational requirement was to meditate on the Teachings, and gradually to free themselves from mortal passions and worldly desires. To join the order, a person had only to 'go out into the open', *pravrayja* – both to quit his or her house (and with it the trappings of lay life) and to take up the life of wandering without any personal possessions.

The initiate would then don the yellow robe, have his head shaved, and utter a threefold incantation. The minimum age was seven – the age of Rahula, the Son of the Enlightened One, when he joined the community.

At his initiation, the novice is informed of the four basic rules of monastic life:

- to feed oneself by alms alone;
- to dress oneself in clothes taken up from the dust;
- to stop a while at the foot of trees;
- to heal one's wounds with natural remedies.

Monks led a completely nomadic existence. Scriptural records tell how Buddha and his companions wandered the entire length of the mid-Ganges basin, meditating and preaching the Buddhist teachings, sometimes singly but more often in groups, from town to town and from village to village.

A remarkable parallel may be drawn between this and the sending out of Jesus' disciples, who likewise went out preaching 'unto the nations', in their case in one last final attempt to convince Israel of his message:

> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;
>
> And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgement, than for that city.

And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

(Mark 6:7–13)

In this form of Christianity, as in Buddhism, there is no question of conversion by force. The preaching was instead for the salvation of many – the many whom Isaiah (53:11) had foretold would be 'justified' by the knowledge of God's 'righteous servant'.

Documents in Sinhalese relate that shortly after the Council of Haran (now Harwan near Srinagar), which occurred during the time of King Kanishka (the AD mid–100s), missionaries were once more despatched to Kashmir, Gandhara, and Mahisamandala, to Vanavasi, to Yonarattha (the 'Land of the Greeks'), and to Sri Lanka.

In the Musée Borély, in Marseilles, are the remains of two figurines in sitting posture, presumably votive idols, which were found in nearby Roquepertuse, in small recesses carved out of the smooth rock wall. Although the statuettes are missing their heads, and the authorities believe they represent Celto-Iberian deities, they look for all the world like early statues of Bodhisattvas and have all the attributes of such Buddhist 'enlightenment beings' – they are seated in the classic posture of Buddha, and wear the Brahman's cord over the shoulder and decorative rings around their necks and upper arms, signifying their holy status. The arms are very carefully positioned so that the gestures of the hands and fingers (*mudra*) take on symbolic meaning (Plate 23). One hand forms the standard gesture of touching the Earth (*Bhumi-sparsha mudra*), representing the summoning of the Earth to be a witness to the truth of the Buddha's words; the other hand is held before the chest in a reassuring pose (*Abhaya mudra*).

Putting a date to these finds seems to present no particular problem: they derive from the second century BC. The small recesses in the sloping rock would have served merely as temporary protection for the statuettes – after all, the original monastic rule for Buddhist monks required them not to live in fixed

dwellings but in temporary dwellings such as simple huts and caves. The arrangement of the Roquepertuse shrines is very similar, moreover, to the layout of some of the well-known rock shrines of the East, such as those in Bamiyan (Afghanistan) or at Ajanta and Ellora (India).

Buddhism, which was much more flexible and apolitical than the rigid structure of Brahmanism, would seem also to have been quite capable of accommodating the various invasions by differing peoples who swarmed into the Indus basin, the upper Ganges basin and the Deccan. Such invaders included the Hellenic Bactrians of the second century BC, and the Scythians and Parthians in the first century BC. In the *Milindapanha*, the great conqueror Menander enters into peaceful discussions with the Buddhist monk Nagasena. The Scythian rulers of the Kushan dynasty themselves encouraged the spread of Buddhism after their own conversion. The most famous of them, Kanishka, was as keen an adherent of Buddhism as Ashoka.

The Council of Haran epitomises this period. Several sources describe its taking place under the rule of Kanishka, during the second half of the first century, in Kashmir. The Council seems to have involved only the Buddhist monastic communities of north-western India, and in particular the Sarvastivadins who were numerous there – theirs was a school of Hinayana Buddhism that had originated in the third century BC, and was eventually to merge with Mahayana Buddhism after the Council of Haran. The Sarvastivadins of Kashmir probably thought it best to submit their understanding of the Tripitaka (the 'Three Baskets' of the Buddhist canon) to an authoritative inspection in order that the diverging, reformist tendencies that had sprung up in their own community could be discussed. At this Council the entire canon of Mahayana Buddhism, as it had developed over the last two centuries BC, was finally codified – an event that marks the emergence of the Mahayana as a religious faith in its own right.

The early Christians of the East evidently displayed little or no opposition to Mahayana Buddhism, as is manifest, for example, in the fourth-century manuscripts found at Turfan in east Turkestan (today the Chinese province of Sinkiang). Christians, Buddhists and Manicheans all lived there in harmony at the same time together, even using the same places of worship.[1] Representations of Buddha as the Good Shepherd Jesus,[2] and a Buddhist *Jesus-Messiah Sutra* have also been discovered in the area.

Therapeuts, Essenes and Nazarenes

On the complete rout and final scattering of the Jews by the Roman Emperor Titus in AD 70, the mysterious community of Essenes then resident in Palestine hid their library of parchment manuscripts and papyrus scrolls in large clay vases in caves within the Qaratania mountains that overlook the Dead Sea. There they remained, forgotten, until in 1947 they were rediscovered and deciphered. Christian theologians were amazed to learn that most of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount attributed to Jesus somehow featured in the text of the Dead Sea Scrolls, parts of which had been compiled generations before Jesus' time![3]

Was there any link at all between the early Christian movement and the Essenes? Could the Christian religion have begun as an offshoot of Essene modes of worship? Otherwise, where had the Essenes got the selfsame Beatitudes from? Is it possible that Buddhist ideas had permeated through to pre-Christian Judea and Galilee?

Multiple and complex lines of communication between the East and the West have existed since very early times in human history, and there are accordingly a great many parallels between ancient India and ancient Egypt – both civilizations that originated and expanded on the banks of great rivers in the third millennium BC. The sacred plant of India is the lotus, which, growing from the navel of the god Vishnu, brings forth the god Brahma, and on which the contemplative Buddha is enthroned. The lotus is also the sacred flower of Osiris, for long the supreme deity of the Egyptian pantheon and simultaneously god of the dead. In Indian mythology the god Shiva dances in a great fury, holding the lifeless body of his consort over his shoulder, so scattering parts of her body throughout the land. According to the ancient Egyptian version of the same myth, Set, Osiris' malign brother, scatters the fourteen parts of Osiris' body like seeds all over the Earth.

Whereas all the old cultures of the Near East believe in a single and unique universe, which progresses in linear fashion from the Creation to the Last Day, in Egypt as in India the belief is that the world moves in an endless cycle of formation and dissolution. In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, Osiris says, 'I am yesterday, today and tomorrow, and I have the power to be born a second time.'

Clay tablets have been found in the valley of the Euphrates originating from the Indus valley culture, which flourished in the second millenium BC. Spices, peacocks, monkeys and sandalwood

were exported from India to the West throughout the ancient period. By means so far unknown, the alphabet used to write down the Semitic languages spoken in ancient Ethiopia were borrowed from India. Indian philosophers probably travelled as far as Athens, Sparta and Corinth, and taught the Greek world the wisdom of the *Upanishads*. According to Aristoxenus, who was writing during the time of Alexander the Great, the philosopher Socrates (469–399 BC) met an Indian in Athens. It is likely that the theory of the transmigration of souls implicit in the philosophical works of Pythagoras, Plato and the Stoics was inspired by the teachings of such Indian scholars.

In the year 325 BC, Alexander the Great crossed the Khyber Pass and invaded north-western India. The young Macedonian was not just a great military leader but was also a student of the celebrated Aristotle and deeply fond of philosophy. It was important to him to bring back with him to Macedonia the art and literature of the conquered territories, and as much as possible of their knowledge and ideas. Alexander probably brought a number of Buddhist monks and Hindu yogis to his new cultural and spiritual centre at the mouth of the Nile, the city of Alexandria, where the cornerstone for a world university was laid down. It was thus through wise men from the East that ideas of asceticism and a vegetarian dietary regime – ideas generally foreign to the Mediterranean area before then – came to Egypt.

Two centuries before Christ, a remarkable mystical movement arose among the Jews of Alexandria and Palestine. In Egypt these mystics were known as Therapeuts; their spiritual brethren in Palestine called themselves Essenes and Nazarenes. In this religious movement we find the answers to the questions posed above. The Jewish historian Flavius Josephus, who was present at the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, has left us a graphic eyewitness account of the rites of the Essenes. Philo of Alexandria also mentions a short visit to a settlement of Therapeuts on the shores of the Marcotis Sea, where they practised rites that were remarkably similar to those of the Buddhists. Like the Buddhists, the Therapeuts and Essenes renounced meat, wine and sexual excess.

The community of the Essenes lived in caves that had been excavated in the rock walls of the Qaratania mountains beside the Dead Sea, opposite the ancient town of Jericho. At exactly the same time, Buddhist monks were living in caves cut into the rocky cliffs of the mountains and heights along India's west coast, and centring on a temple cave (Chaitya).

Like the Buddhist monks, the Essenes and Therapeuts lived in celibate monastic communities – a way of life that was itself a novelty in the Mediterranean area, for no religious observance like it had been seen there before. They devoted their lives to a search for knowledge of God, and strove to attain it by means of protracted fasts and periods of silence.

Philo mentions that the Essenes stayed away from the bloody rituals performed in the Temple at Jerusalem because they were strongly opposed to animal sacrifice. The Essene religion may well in fact have been instituted as a protest against such gory elements of Jewish orthodoxy and against the rigid severity of the Mosaic Law. A similar development had taken place several centuries earlier in India, after all, when the Buddha protested against Brahmin rules and rituals which had lost their meaning.

The Essene community was made up of monks and lay persons, like the Buddhist Sangha. The monastic community led a communally organized ascetic life in their all but inaccessible caves in the mountains around Jericho, where it was possible for them to live well away from the Orthodox Jewish groups. John the Baptist was one of these Essene recluses. The lay members of the Essenes lived in villages and towns, where they married and brought up children, and strove to lead a pious, pure, spiritual life. As is still the practice in many Buddhist countries, the lay families often gave up their firstborn son to be a monk in the cave monastery. Perhaps John the Baptist was taken into the Essene fold as a child in this way.

The word *Therapeut* means 'one who ministers', and therefore 'healer', and the Therapeut community on the outskirts of Alexandria was no doubt influenced by the presence of Buddhist monks. The Buddhists monks were also called healers or physicians. The Therapeuts (*Therapeutae*) used to sit on reed mats, as was the tradition of Buddhist monks in India, and their custom of baptizing novices at their initiation into monkhood was also taken from Buddhism. They consumed neither meat nor wine, lived in voluntary poverty, fasted at set times, communally recited and sang religious texts and hymns, and clothed themselves in white robes.

Much of a Therapeut's life was passed in silent meditation and the rituals of worship. The Essenes – both the monks up in the mountains and the lay members down in the towns – tended to occupy themselves with agriculture and manual crafts. The Qumran Scrolls relate how both communities expectantly awaited

an imminent end of life on Earth, striving to prepare themselves for a future life with God by evincing brotherly love for one another and for humanity in general, and by doing good deeds. The Essenes discerned eight stages of spiritual growth, rather like the Eightfold Path of the Buddhists, and the aim of these (again as in Buddhism) was to reach a higher plane of existence and to attain Enlightenment.

The Synoptic Gospels tell how Jesus instructed his disciples to travel about on foot, staff in hand (like some Hindu monks), and to minister to the people. During his travels through Judea and Galilee, Jesus may well have stayed overnight at the houses of Essenes resident in the various places he visited.

The Essenes baptized their novices at their initiation. On their induction into monkhood, Buddhist novices underwent a similar baptismal rite probably adopted from the Brahmans. The abbot of the Buddhist monastery sprinkled the head of the novice with milk and water once he had confessed his sins. A lamp burning throughout this ritual symbolized new birth. Interestingly, documents of the very early Christian Church record that after baptism a new Christian was described as *illuminatus* (enlightened).

According to Epiphanius of Constantia (Salamis), the Essenes were also called Nazarenes – *Nazarenos* or *Nazoraios*. In ancient Israel, certain seers were described as Nazarites. These Nazarites condemned the gory sacrifices involved in the worship at the Temple, and were consequently loathed by the orthodox Temple priests. The Jewish faithful were thrice daily encouraged to bring down the wrath of God upon them: 'Send thy curse, O God, upon the Nazarites!'

John's Gospel says that Pilate had a sign fixed to Jesus' Cross that, according to the English translation, read 'Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews'. But in most other languages this is translated slightly differently: as 'Jesus the Nazarene, . . .'[4] Research has shown that the epithet *Nazarene* does not refer to the town of Nazareth, which probably did not even exist at the time. One element in the charges against Jesus, then, was evidently that he was a member of the Nazarenes! If, in addition, the words of the inscription have been altered by tradition or by a need to present a different truth – if, for example, the original version read 'Jesus, Leader of the Nazarenes' – it would go a long way towards explaining why Jesus was so detested by the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Council. He was the leader of a community they abhorred: the Nazarenes.

Jesus the Nazarene

In nearly all the Greek manuscripts, Jesus is given the title 'The Nazarene', virtually always in English translated – wrongly – as 'Jesus of Nazareth'. So in most translations of the Bible, Paul hears a voice on the road to Damascus that says, 'I am Jesus of Nazareth, whom thou persecutest.' In fact the Greek manuscripts contain no such statement, and the version given in the *Jerusalem Bible* is the correct translation: 'I am Jesus the Nazarene, and you are persecuting me' (Acts 22:8).

Was there perhaps some deliberate design behind this inaccurate translation? If the intention was merely to relate Jesus to his place of origin, he should surely have been described as 'Jesus of Bethlehem', for nothing is said to support the claim that Jesus ever lived in Nazareth. In fact, according to Mark's Gospel, his followers lived by the Sea of Galilee, probably in Capernaum, for it is of thereabouts that it is said 'And he . . . came into his own country' (Mark 6:1). At any rate it is from here that 'There came then his brethren . . .' (Mark 3:31) to get him to stay at home. If 'his brethren' had come from Nazareth, they would have had to travel a distance of more than 40 kilometres.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the first Christians are called Nazarenes, while Jesus is himself called 'the Nazarene' six times.

In John's Gospel (1:46), Nathanael asks the apostle Philip, 'Can there [be] any good thing come out of Nazareth?' Implicit in the question is the man's astonishment that anyone coming from such a tiny, insignificant place could be possessed of such profound knowledge, let alone benefit from an education thorough enough to suggest that he had attended some celebrated establishment of learning. (Nathanael had obviously never heard of anything happening there.)

The *Greek-German Dictionary of the Writings of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (1963) openly declares that 'it is very difficult' to find any linguistic connection between the expressions *Nazarene* and *Nazareth*.

The adjectives *Nazarenos*, *Nazorenos* and *Nazoraios* were all variously used to describe Jesus – proving that they are synonyms – and have generally been taken to indicate that Jesus came from the settlement of Nazareth, resulting in his being described as 'Jesus of Nazareth'. As long ago as in 1920, M. Lidzbarski in his work *Mandaean Liturgies* demonstrated that *Nazarene* could not be derived from *Nazareth* by any standard etymological process.

There is no mention of Nazareth in literature older than Jesus' time, and even at that time the place could not have been more than a tiny hamlet – if it existed at all. In Joshua 19:10–15 the site is not mentioned in connection with the tribe of Zebulun, although it does mention Japhia just three kilometres to the south-east (destroyed by the Romans in AD 67).

The word *Nazarene* derives from the Aramaic root *nazar*, which means something like 'to pick out', and thus both 'to discern', 'to observe', and 'to put to one side', 'to preserve'. In a figurative sense, the word can also be used to mean 'to be devoted' or 'to consecrate oneself to the service of God'. Used as a noun, it means 'diadem', the symbol of an anointed head. A Nazarene was therefore an observer and preserver of the sacred rites. The *Nazaria* constituted a branch of the Essenes, and must have been, with the Ebionites, among the original Christian communities which, according to the Talmud, were referred to as *Nozari*[5]. All these Gnostic sects (*gnosis* 'knowledge') used magic in their rituals. Their members were initiates and anointed ones who led ascetic lives dedicated to the community in godliness and righteousness. It is possible that the slightly different spellings of the adjectives that described them in fact relate to individual groups that differed from each other in their interpretation of the faith and in lifestyle, although all were described in terms deriving from the same etymological origin. The description *Nazarene* is also linked by etymological derivation to that of the Old Testament Nazarites, who existed at a time long before Jesus.

Hundreds of years earlier still, the mighty hero Samson was a *Nazoraios* or *Naziraios* who refused to cut his hair and who drank no wine (Judges 13:5–7) – in other words, an ascetic. According to John M. Robertson, contemporary non-ascetics deliberately described themselves as Nazarenes in order to distinguish themselves from 'nazirism' or asceticism.[6]

Jesus cannot be said definitively to have belonged to any of these various groups for he evidently refused to be categorically subject to any imposed laws, choosing, like Buddha, just 'to do the right thing at the right time'. The huge physical distance between Palestine and India had over the centuries widened the gulf in understanding between the leaders of the spiritual faith who subscribed to the principles of Buddhist philosophy in India and their equivalents in Israel. Jesus could for this reason be accurately described as a 'reformer' who was sent to re-establish a unity of belief among the 'lost sheep', to strengthen their resolve, and to

give them spiritual and moral support in their struggle against Roman occupiers, Sadducees, Pharisees and Orthodox Jews.

Jesus was the Divine Messenger for whom many had earnestly longed during a time of tumult and confusion. The two disciples sent by John the Baptist asked him, 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' (Matthew 11:3).

John the Baptist was a prophet to the Nazarenes, and was known as 'the Saviour' in Galilee. Flavius Josephus describes the Baptist as

> . . . an honourable man, who inspired the Jews to do good and to treat each other well, and who urged them to receive baptism. Then, he declared, God would look with favour on the baptised – for baptism conferred physical healing and was not merely the washing away of sin. Atonement for sin must come beforehand, and must centre on the leading of a virtuous life. Massive crowds thronged around John, much moved by what he said . . .

Ritual immersion in water originated in India and continues to be practised daily by the Hindus with the same devotion as it was thousands of years ago – a tradition as old as any mysteries. In Palestine the Essene rite of baptism marks a major point of departure from the dogmas of the Jewish tradition, and especially from the blood sacrifice, which was based on the crude premise that sins are forgiven if blood is shed. Ritual immersion is meant to symbolize release from all that is earthly, on the one hand, and the rebirth of the spirit in a pure body, on the other. The second Book of the *Laws of Manu*, which deals with the sacraments, contains the injunction to pour consecrated water over a newborn baby before severing the umbilical cord. Then a mixture of honey, clarified butter (ghee) and salt should be placed on the baby's tongue with a small, golden spoon, while auspicious prayers are continuously recited.

The Atharva Veda contains the passage, 'Whoever is not purified after birth with the water of the Ganges blessed by the holy invocations will be subject to as many wanderings as years he spent in impurity'('wanderings' refers to life either as a spirit or after a rebirth in another body).

John's form of baptism seems also to have constituted a token of belonging to a certain community, members of which were clearly distinguishable from non-members by their fulfilment of various ritual preconditions. This makes it clear that the Nazarenes were an independent sect who celebrated their own version of the mys-

teries of an established teaching. Meanwhile, esoteric sect-leaders who attract emotional crowds while yet keeping a low public profile have always been the target of distrust and persecution by the ruling authorities. Paul faced the same hostility when he was accused by Tertullus before the governor Felix of being 'a ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes' (Acts 24:5).

According to Pliny the Elder and Josephus, the Nazarene sect had lived on the banks of the Jordan and on the eastern shore of the Dead Sea for at least 150 years before Christ's birth. Its followers were permitted to wear their hair long. Perhaps they never cut it at all, like many Hindu ascetics. John the Baptist is depicted with long hair, and wearing 'raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins' (Matthew 3:4). A description of what Jesus looked like is given by a Roman patrician named Lentulus in a letter to the Roman senate. In this apocryphal document, known as the *Epistle of Lentulus*, Jesus' hair is described as 'flowing and wavy'; it fell loose over his shoulders, and was 'parted in the middle of the head after the fashion of the Nazaraians'.

It is not really possible today to form a detailed picture of the Nazarene sect from the few sources at our disposal because the references are so scanty. Nor would it be possible, therefore, to trace how the spiritual attitude of Jesus the Nazarene differed from that of his orthodox contemporaries – were it not for the discovery of a wealth of new information about the sect of the Essenes, in which the influence of Buddhist teachings is clearly visible. The Essenes differed from the Nazarenes only in a few external details: Jesus used oil, for example, whereas the Essenes used only pure water.

As long ago as the nineteenth century, those familiar with the accounts of the Essenes came to the conclusion that Jesus' community was an Essene group. The Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz even described Christianity as 'Essenism with foreign elements'.[8] The Essenes are also evidenced in indirect references to them made by ancient historians. The Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria called them 'athletes of virtue', and Josephus dedicated nearly an entire chapter to them in *The Jewish War* (II:8). Both estimated the total number of members to be about 4000 'men of excellent morals, who live throughout the land'. The Roman author Pliny the Elder also mentions the sect of the Essenes.

But it was not until the discovery of the famous Dead Sea Scrolls at Qumran in the twentieth century that people perceived the full significance of Essene teachings, which anticipated the teachings of Jesus and shed a completely new light on Jesus himself.

The Essenes: Christianity Before Jesus

In the summer of 1947, a young Bedouin came across the entrance to a cave while searching the cliffs beside the Dead Sea for a goat lost from his herd. His curiosity aroused, the youthful pastoralist entered, and discovered a number of earthenware vases sealed with lids among a whole lot of fragments of other vases. Hoping to find a treasure, the lad opened the sealed vessels, but to his great disappointment found just a few ancient scrolls in musty vellum.

Treasure it was, though, and the find was soon to prove the greatest archaeological sensation of the century. When the famous archaeologist William F. Allbright was shown the scrolls in 1948, he called them the greatest manuscript find of our time. He dated them to the first century BC, and had no doubts about their authenticity.

Over the course of the following years, researchers in the area of Khirbet Qumran discovered ten more caves and many more scrolls, a good quantity of which have still not yet been completely translated or made public. It was soon clear, nonetheless, how very similar the teachings of Jesus were to those of the Essenes. Indeed, some even said that the Essenes must have been the true precursors of early Christianity. The astounding similarity of the two movements is particularly evident in their parallel theological views and their religious institutions: all confirm the existence of a Christianity *before* Jesus.

Seven scrolls from the first cave are now on display in the Hall of Manuscripts of the Museum of Israel in Jerusalem. The most extensive manuscript is one known as the 'Isaiah scroll of St Mark'.[9] Its fifty-four manuscript columns of Hebrew contain the complete Book of the prophet Isaiah. The Isaiah scroll is the oldest of the finds (dated to around 150 BC), and bears an astonishing resemblance to early copies of Biblical texts. Fragments of a second Isaiah manuscript[10] and a commentary to the Book of the prophet Habakkuk[11] were also found.

The most important find, however, was a scroll almost two metres in length, which detailed the rules and regulations for a religious community. Today the document is called *Serek Hajjahad*, from its opening words, meaning 'The Rule of the Community', or *The Manual of Instructions*.[12] The first part describes a Covenant of Eternal Love which binds the members of the community to God. The second part describes 'the two spirits in the nature of Man': the spirit of light and truth, and its opposite, the spirit of error and

darkness. (In Buddhism this is expressed as the contrast between Knowledge and Ignorance.) The regulations of the Order follow, giving a detailed description of conditions for entry and penalties for infringement against the Rule of the Community. The whole thing comes to an end with a final long hymn of thanksgiving.

In addition to the Rule for the celibate order of monks, a second manuscript was found that had been rolled up with (or possibly once even sewn on to) it. This scroll was entitled *Rule for the Whole Community*,[13] and was directed at the lay branch of the community, for those members who were married.

There are very evident parallels here with the early Buddhist communities, which also made a distinction between the monks (in Pali *bhikkhu*) and the laity (*upasaka*).

Those who belonged to the 'worldly' branch of the sect were to be taught *The Manual of Instructions* with all the rules of the community from the age of eleven years. (Jesus, remember, was taken to Jerusalem from Egypt at about that age – and then disappeared, not to be seen there again until he was an adult man aged over thirty.) Men were not allowed to marry until they had turned twenty; at the age of twenty-five they were accorded a position and an authority in the community. It was actually possible to rise to any of the chief offices at the age of twenty, but it was still necessary then to render full obedience to the priests and elders of the community. Men of standing were expected to retire from office when they reached a certain age.

Towards the end of the scroll, there appears a description of the seating arrangements for the communal meal celebrating the life to come after death – it was these seating arrangements that became a topic of debate among Jesus' disciples at the Last Supper (Luke 22:24–27).

Another scroll, badly damaged in parts, contains both the biblical Psalms and some forty original Essene psalms, all of which begin with the words, 'I praise thee, Lord'; this scroll is accordingly known as *Hokhajot*: 'Songs of Praise'.[4]

The other writings brought to light are evidently the meagre time-worn remnants of what discoverers of bygone centuries had overlooked, for even Origen reports that a translation of the Psalms had been found together with other manuscripts in a vase somewhere near Jericho. And the Patriarch of Seleucia, the Nestorian Timothy I (*fl.* AD 823), in one of his letters described the discovery of some Hebrew scriptures laid up in a cave not far from Jericho.

Some of the texts were written in a secret code, but there are constant references to a 'New Covenant' (which of course is what Martin Luther and other reformers meant by 'New Testament') and a mysterious 'Teacher of Righteousness'.

In his *Historia Naturalis*, Pliny the Elder mentions a monastery that he had seen a short distance to the north of En-gedi on the western shore of the Dead Sea. He called it the Essene Monastery, and its members he described as ' . . . a reclusive group of men, one of the most remarkable in the world, without any women at all, who have renounced the baser passions and live utterly on their own resources under the palm trees' (V:17).

Less than one kilometre away from the cave in which the first scrolls were discovered are some ruins that have been known since ancient times as Khirbet Qumran ('the ruins of Qumran'), long held to be the remains of an early Roman fort. Excavations at the site began only in 1951, under Lancaster Harding of the Jordanian Office of Antiquities and Père Roland de Vaux, Director of the Dominican Institute of Theology in Jerusalem. What they found surpassed their greatest expectations – the Monastery of Qumran, in which the scrolls themselves had probably been written. Over the subsequent five years, labouring intensively, the researchers uncovered an extensive settlement protected by a well-fortified wall. A squarish building at the centre was adjoined by several smaller buildings, a large dining-hall, baptismal baths, and no fewer than thirteen wells from which a complex system of channels supplied water all round. There was also a cemetery containing more than a thousand graves, in which only men had been buried. And they found a scriptorium, a writing-room with carved stone tables in which ink-wells had been bored, where most of the manuscripts of the nearby caves had presumably originated. It is now known that the monastery had been inhabited from as early as the eighth century BC, but had been abandoned at the time of the Babylonian Exile, to be reoccupied once more only at around 175 (the second century) BC.

Josephus gives an account of how the monks lived:

> They spurn worldly wealth; most admirable is how they own all things in common so that no one among them possesses more than anyone else. For it is their rule that anyone who wishes to join the sect must first donate everything he owns to the whole community. The result is that neither abject poverty nor excessive opulence is anywhere to be seen. Instead, they treat all property as for their common use – although originally collected from individual members of the

> order – very much in the spirit of brotherhood. Oil is regarded as dirty, however. If one of them has his body smoothed with oil against his will, he takes a thorough bath to get it off. For to walk around with skin in its natural state is as virtuously creditable to them as wearing clean white robes.[15]

There are obvious parallels between this description of the Essenes' way of life, the Buddhist monastic rules, and Jesus' own habits. Just as Buddhist monks owned no property beyond their clothing and a few minor nomadic necessities, Jesus led the existence of an itinerant teacher who possessed little or nothing. And just as Jesus required his disciples to renounce families and worldly goods, so the Buddhist rule required that followers joined the community by 'going out into the open' – by quitting their houses and families (and with them the trappings of lay life) to enter the brotherhood of monks wandering without permanent shelter, to be free of all earthly concerns, to meditate on the Teachings, and gradually to free themselves from mortal passions and worldly desires. Jesus said, 'It is easier for a camel [although he might have meant a camel-hair rope] to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God' (Matthew 19:24).

The Gospels provide another example of Jesus' thoughts on freedom from earthly concerns:

> And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.
>
> And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head.
>
> (Matthew 8:19–20)

A further point of interest is the Essene ban on oiling the body. Buddha himself is said to have warned his followers against the practice because it corresponded to taking an inordinate pride in one's own body, amounting thus to a selfish desire. The Nazarene sect was apparently under no obligation to conform with this strict ordinance.

The Essenes wore white robes, which led some eighteenth-century critical philosophers to declare the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus to be no more than an elaborate hoax staged by Essene monks. The critics said that the young man in white robes who announced the Resurrection to the women at the empty tomb was clearly proved by his white raiment to have belonged to the Essenes. During the nineteenth century the theory was also advanced that Jesus was the natural son of an Essene to whom

Mary had given herself by way of religious betrothal. The child was handed over to the Order, which, according to an account by Josephus,[16] genuinely was an Essene custom and practice.

As long ago as in 1831, August Friedrich Gfrörer, vicar of a parish in Stuttgart and teacher at the seminary in Tubingen, wrote: 'The Christian Church evolved from the community of the Essenes, whose ideas they developed, and without whose rules its organization could not have been established.'

Some linguistic historians believe the expression *Essene* basically to mean 'baptist'. Others relate it instead to a Syrian word *hasen* 'the pious', or to the Aramaic *assaya* 'healer', 'physician' (semantically comparable with the Greek *therapeut*). Many Essene monks dedicated years of their lives to ascetic practices of self-discipline and contemplation, and achieved astonishing powers of extrasensory perception and telekinesis just as the yogis and fakirs in India did and do. The Essene monastery was located near Jericho, among the mountains west of the Dead Sea – a region renowned for its mild and healthy climate since the days of the prophets Elijah and Elisha. This is the one and only part of Palestine where it is warm enough throughout the year to practise exercises like those of Indian yoga out in the open air. The mystical gifts described by the Essenes themselves are the same extraordinary powers to which the students of Kundalini Yoga attain in India; they include clairvoyance and precognition, levitation and teleportation, healing by the laying-on of hands, and the restoring of the dead to life.

The fact that the New Testament observes complete and utter silence on the subject of the Essene Order – on a sect that was at least as significant in numbers as the Sadducees and the Pharisees (Josephus put their number at 4000) – implies that the omission was quite deliberate.

Simple geography shows that Jesus could not have been unaware of the monastery at Qumran. Indeed, the spot on the bank of the Jordan where Jesus underwent his ritual baptism at the hands of John (by means of which he was inducted into the moderate Nazarene sect) was within sight of the monastery, a mere seven kilometres away. To visit the place is to see how striking is the proximity of the baptismal site to Qumran; the clear air of the wide mountain wasteland seems to bring the two locations visibly even closer. At the same point there is also a clear view of the mountain on which, by tradition, Jesus was tempted by the devil during his period of isolation following baptism (Luke 4:1–13): the

mountain is some fifteen kilometres distant.

John lived here in the desert, perhaps even in the caves of Qumran. Jesus spent forty days of isolation here in the desert immediately after being baptized. The reclusive inhabitants of Qumran certainly referred to the area in which they lived as 'the desert' in their writings. Jesus, in his sojourn, was 'with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him' (Mark 1:13). But the word translated as *angels* need mean no more than 'messengers', and the Essenes preserved an extensive hierarchy of 'angel-messengers' that was part of their sacred mysteries. So if Jesus spent some time in a cave outside Qumran, perhaps as part of a period representing a novitiate, there may well have been some contact with the monastery – perhaps the 'angels' were actually monks!

In the chapter about the Essenes, Josephus wrote:

> Anyone who wishes to join the sect is not granted admission immediately but has first to spend a year outside the order, leading the same kind of life as the members. He is provided with a small axe, a loincloth and a white robe. If he passes this test of asceticism over the whole period, he takes one step closer to full membership: he may take part in the baptismal consecration with water but may not yet partake of the communal meals.[17]

Much the same procedure occurs in Tibet. Before an ordinary monk is consecrated as lama (meaning 'higher [one]'), he must undertake a series of exercises and tests. The aspirant is also expected to stay somewhere outside the community for a time, in a place where he can remain totally undisturbed so as to devote himself completely to meditation. The Hemis monastery in Ladakh, like all the larger lamaseries, has a second much smaller and simpler building for the purpose, on the peak of a high mountain some five kilometres distant from the main monastery. Immersed in deep meditation in their individual cells, the candidates receive only a little food twice daily from assistants.

An earthquake destroyed the entire community of Qumran in 31 BC. Rifts and cracks in the terrain are still visible, and the level of the floor varies by nearly half a metre at some points. Qumran remained uninhabited for almost thirty years after the earthquake, and it was not until about the time of Jesus' birth that the monastery was revived and endowed with a new spirit.

In addition to human graves, the buried remains of animals were also found in the grounds of the monastery. The bones of sheep, goats, cows, calves and lambs had been carefully laid to rest

in earthenware vessels. It would appear, therefore, that although the Essenes put their domestic animals to good use, they did not kill or eat the animals themselves because they considered the taking of any life at all to be an atrocity, like the Buddhists. The monks cultivated fields and orchards. Countless date-stones confirm the existence of a plantation of palm trees just as Pliny the Elder described. Philo tells how bee-keeping was also one of the community's major pastimes – at which John the Baptist's daily fare as recorded in Mark's Gospel (locusts and honey) springs to mind.

Somewhat surprisingly, about 400 coins were also brought to light at the monastery, and from what they reveal the history of the community can be reconstructed with great precision. Quite a few of the coins date from 4 BC, when Archelaus succeeded his father Herod as governor of Judea. The gap in the sequence of coins prior to this date suggests that it was only on the accession of Archelaus that the monastery was permitted to reopen. Members of the community had had to keep well clear of their monastic centre for all the years that Herod, based in his luxurious winter palace in Jericho a mere twelve kilometres away, had been suppressing and expelling the Essene sects. Herod dead, the Essenes returned and began to rebuild their monastery. Qumran remained continuously inhabited from then on until the Jewish rebellion against Rome in AD 68. The grounds of the area display evidence of a violent final destruction. A layer of ashes indicates that the monastery was overwhelmed by fire.

The Teaching of the Essenes at Qumran

The members of the Essene community at Qumran did not ascribe any specific name to their sect in their religious writings. They called themselves 'the holy community', 'the chosen ones of God', 'the men of truth', or, most often, 'the Sons of Light'. In many respects the Essenes fulfilled the precepts inherent in Jewish Law to the letter, but they also deviated from it to such a degree in other respects that it is debatable whether the Qumran community should really be described as a Jewish sect at all.

According to the *Hokhajot*, the Songs of Praise (or Essene psalms) that were unearthed, the mission of the Essenes was to preach 'the Good News (*eu-angelion*) to the poor as a measure of God's mercy', and they themselves were to be 'messengers of the

Good News'. They perceived a need for a 'New Covenant' with God – in fact they sometimes referred to themselves as the New Covenant – as was later held to have been established in the person of Jesus. The New Covenant was to last 'from the day that the One Teacher departs until the coming of the Messiah of Aaron and Israel'.

But most astonishing of all is the fact that when the Qumran sect prayed as a community, as they did three times every day, they did not face in the direction of the Temple in Jerusalem (as did and do all Orthodox Jews) but eastwards. The focus of their prayer lay to the east, in the direction of the rising sun. Josephus writes that the Essenes 'speak only piously . . . before sunrise, offering up certain ancient prayers to the sun . . .' This shows that the Essenes regarded the sun as an acceptable symbol for God Himself. One of the Qumran psalms makes the point even more clearly, addressing God as '. . . the true aurora of Dawn [who] appeared to me at the break of day', and again: '. . . you have appeared to me in your might with the coming of the day'.

The Rule of the Community (or *The Manual of Instructions*) required the faithful of the New Covenant to recite a prayer at dawn and a prayer at dusk. The followers of Pythagoras – who was apparently taught by Brahmans in India – at his establishment in Crotona, southern Italy, and the adherents of the Gnostic sect of Hermes Trismegistos (based on worship of the Egyptian god Thoth but later much influenced by the Pythagoreans), observed an identical mode of worship. Both the easterly direction of prayer and the symbolic use of the sun are reminiscent of the Sun Temple of Martand in Kashmir.

The Essenes were just as remarkable in that they did not use the calendar sanctioned by the Temple authorities in Jerusalem, which was a lunar calendar. They had their own method of defining dates that was based on the solar year, which is somewhat more accurate, and which had been in general use in India since the beginning of Brahmin domination. Only during the time of Julius Caesar was the solar calendar promulgated for use throughout the Roman Empire, although it has still, even today, not been accepted by the Jews.[18] In the Qumran calendar, therefore, feastdays of the religious year always fell on the same day of the week, in contrast to official Jewish practice.

Nor is the practice of dividing the year into four seasons of Jewish origin. It was Pythagoras who introduced the quarterly arrangement from India, and before that, the ancient Greeks had

really only thought in terms of three, or even two, seasons.

The spiritual background and original source of Essene philosophy is further revealed by another Essene teaching: like the Indian sages and the Greek philosophers they believed in immortality, a life after death – in other words, that the soul or spirit outlives and leaves its temporal prison, the body. In this respect it was Jesus who added a new element in his teaching of resurrection. He spoke of the resurrection of the dead, but without expressly referring to the resurrection of the body. So he was not necessarily talking about a resurrection in the flesh, but about the doctrine of reincarnation, transmigration, and the continuous cycle of rebirths until the end of *samsara* (the world of constant change, as described in the *Upanishads*) – a basic tenet of all forms of religion in India. The Pythagoreans, the cultists of the Orphic mysteries, Empedocles and Plato were all, well before the Essenes, acquainted with the doctrine of the cycle of rebirths by which the soul enters a new body. The notion of metempsychosis (the expression for it used by the ancient Greeks as well as modern English) has survived in the West to the present day chiefly through the Gnostic sects and a few non-Arabic sects of Islam, and the subject remains studied in university courses in theosophy and religious anthropology.

Even during the nineteenth century, commentators pointed out Buddhist aspects in the teachings of the Essenes.[19] Some saw them as intermediaries between rabbis, Gnostics, Platonists and Pythagoreans on the one hand, and Zoroastrians and Buddhists on the other, and suggested that the religion of the Essenes and Therapeuts evolved from the merging of Buddhism and Semitic monotheism, just as Buddhism had merged with shamanist Bon in Tibet, with the philosophies of Taoism and Confucianism in China, and with the Shinto religion in Japan.[20]

The Buddhists wore white robes like the Essenes – and like the early Christians. Catholic scholars were astounded on first noting the extraordinary similarity between the rituals and teachings of Tibetan Buddhism and those of the Catholic Church. The costume of the Tibetan lamas is virtually identical not only with the vestments worn by Catholic priests, but also with the clothing of the apostles and the first Christians, as depicted in contemporary frescoes, right down to the details. The hierarchical organization of the Tibetan and Roman Catholic monastic orders exhibit quite astounding similarities. Like the Catholics, the Buddhists say prayers of intercession and praise, and give alms and offerings,

and in both religions the monks take vows of poverty, chastity and obedience. Buddhists use consecrated water and raise their voices in the celebration of a religious service in which the liturgy is very close indeed to that of the Eastern Christian Church. The rosary came to the Catholic Church as the Buddhist prayer-beads. The Buddhist depiction of the *aura* became the halo of Christian iconography.

The Doctor of the Church Jerome and the Church historian Eusebius state that Christian monasteries evolved along the lines of communities of Therapeuts in Alexandria. The three major 'ranks' of Christian clergy (bishop, priest and deacon) do in fact correspond to the three 'ranks' of the Therapeut monks. The first Christians are described by Epiphanius as *Therapeutae* and *Jessians* (the latter of which is presumably a corrupted form of 'Essenes'). The highest ambition for an early Christian initiate was to become a Therapeut, and much of the everyday organization of daily life in the first Christian communities was undertaken by seven elected deacons – a title that itself also derives from the monastic conformation of the Therapeuts.

Christians celebrate the Lord's day on Sunday, whereas Jews celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday. The Essenes likewise held the holy day to be Sunday, on which they started their Sabbath celebration. On the Sabbath, the Jews brought meat, wine and corn to the Temple to sacrifice, and the priests were allotted a proportion for their own use. The reason for the priests' bitter enmity with the Essenes is obvious: the Essene sect's refusal to have anything to do with blood sacrifice represented a considerable threat both to the priests' diet and, more significantly, to their main source of income (either in performing the slaughter of the animals, or in supplying or licensing the animals for sacrifice). This was surely the main cause of the plotting of the priests against Jesus, for as leader of a Nazarene-Essene movement Jesus was propounding a doctrine that would have eliminated many of the duties and most of the status of the priests. As far as they were concerned, Jesus had to be got rid of for them to be certain that their livelihoods were secure.

Philo describes Jewish mystics who were similar to the Hindu gymnosophists of India, who likewise rejected the sacrificing of animals.

The Essenes also believed in a doctrine of moral causation – that the deeds done in the present life strongly affect one's position in the next life: the Indian teaching of *karma*. Those who understood these mysteries had either to live righteous lives or continue to sin

and stand condemned on the Day of Judgement. This was in the context of their fervent expectation of the apocalypse and of the imminent coming of the kingdom of God.

There were numerous points of contact in the outlook of Jesus and that of the Essenes, but that there were differences too should not be overlooked. The Gospels report that Jesus ate meat and drank wine. He grew up in an environment influenced by local Essenes, and most of his followers were Essenes. But although he had probably been a novice in an Essene monastery, he later made a distinct break with the rigidly mannered precepts of the sect because he felt – as had Buddha some 500 years before him – that blind adherence to strict rules and regulations was no way to attain personal salvation. And by taking an individual stand, Jesus created a new, tolerant version of the Essene-Nazarene faith, one that made room for ordinary lay people who were not in a position to follow the path of asceticism: one that welcomed anyone and everyone with open arms.

In particular, Jesus' approach to the Commandments and to the other requirements of Mosaic Law was much freer: 'Ye have heard that it was said by them of old . . . But *I* say unto you . . .' (Matthew 5:21–48). According to strict Orthodox Jewish law, those who disobeyed the restrictions on activity on the Sabbath, and who disregarded warnings, should be put to death. But the Damascus text of Qumran prohibits the execution of a person who breaks the Sabbath, and according to Matthew's Gospel Jesus said, 'For the Son of Man is Lord even of the sabbath day' (Matthew 12:8).

The disparity between the views of Jesus and those of the Essenes is especially evident in connection with the idea of loving one's enemy. Unlike Jesus, the Essenes felt no compunction about hating their enemies. On the contrary, the people of Qumran rather prided themselves on being at least aloof from, if not morally superior to, the rest of the world. Very different from this, it was Jesus' mission to make contact with sinners, to rescue those who had got lost: his words emphasized that he had been sent out to find 'the lost sheep of the house of Israel', and he expressly disapproved of religious bigotry, of any organization or institution that claimed to have exclusive access to righteousness.

Another sharp difference lies in the contrasting attitudes towards the use of oil or balsam. Jesus, after all, is the Christ, the Anointed, a description used as a title for him – and one that sets him quite apart from the Essenes. The ancient magical texts claimed that unction served the specific purpose of enchanting

demons so as to grant protection from them, and on a medical basis it helped to heal wounds and drive away diseases of mind and body. In some way the unguent 'sealed' the body of a worshipper, so somehow assuring him or her of God's protection. Celsus says that the snake-worshipping Ophites possessed a magic ointment that transformed anyone who received it into a 'Son of the Father': 'I have been anointed with the pure white unguent of the Tree of Life'.[21] In the apocryphal *Gospel of Philip* there is a passage: 'The Tree of Life is in the centre of Paradise; it is the oil tree that yields the oil with which holy kings are anointed (*chrisma*), and by means of it resurrection [was made possible].'[22]

If it is the rebirth of a soul within a new body that is the overall idea here, it is evident what a decisive new element Jesus, the Anointed, introduced to the teachings of the different Essene groupings. As Irenaeus wrote, the sacrament of holy unction was a 'rite denoting salvation' for the 'one become perfect', and was consequently regarded as far more important than baptism. The anointing was generally on the temples and forehead, often in the form of a cross. The tradition of anointing has its origins in India, where Hindu ascetics (*sadhus*) may still be recognized by a small white circle, or white horizontal or vertical stripes, on the forehead, applied with a mixture of oil and holy ash (*vibhuti*).

Buddha and Jesus: A Comparison

The God of the Semitic tribes is, to pull no punches, a bloodthirsty and vengeful deity. Yahweh-Jehovah of the Jews tends to be depicted as a fearsome overlord seated on a throne above the clouds, violently chastising his Chosen People whenever they transgress his edicts and his restrictions.

The philosophy behind Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, as relayed by Matthew's Gospel, is illuminated by a totally different God. Christ's message is a message of love, a joyful message of forgiveness and reconciliation: love your neighbour as (you love) yourself; if anyone strikes you on one cheek, turn the other towards him too. There can hardly be a greater contrast with the attitudes revealed in the Old Testament. No other religion of the eastern Mediterranean area lays claim to the magnanimously loving Grace preached by Jesus. Where did Jesus learn the precepts he proclaimed in the Sermon on the Mount?

A possible answer to this question may be found in early (pre-Christian) Buddhist scriptures like the *Lalitavistara*, which is the Buddhist text that exhibits the greatest number of parallels with the tradition of the Gospels. Written in Sanskrit, the *Lalitavistara* is a biography of the Buddha that is linked in time and culture with the Sarvastivadins. Its most ancient sections, deriving from the Hinayana, date from the third century BC, although the full version in its present form was compiled in the centuries either side of Christ's birth, and was included in the canon of the Mahayana by edict of the Council of Haran in the first century AD – significantly, some years before the compilation of the New Testament.

In the *Lalitavistara*, Buddha says:

> The knowledge of the truth, the attainment of Nirvana – this is the supreme blessing. Through love alone can hate be vanquished; through perfect love evil may be overcome . . . Speak no harsh words to your neighbour, and he will respond to you in like terms.

A merchant from Sunapaortha asked the Enlightened One to teach him. 'People are violent,' said the Reborn. 'If they offended you, how would you respond?'

The merchant shrugged his shoulders. 'I would make no reply at all to them,' he said.

'And if they hit you?'

'I would not react then either.'

'And if they kill you?'

The merchant smiled. 'Death, Master, is no evil. Some even desire it!'

In the same way, Jesus enjoined his disciples: 'Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.'

Buddha said to his favourite disciple Ananda, 'Believe in me, Ananda! All those who believe in me will come to great joy.' Christ likewise instructed his disciples to believe in him, and not to waver in this faith.

On another occasion, the Buddha described the giving of alms as 'a seed sown on good ground, which brings forth fruit in plenty'. He also declared that 'Food that is eaten does not destroy a person . . . but the taking of a life, stealing, lying, adultery, and even thinking of doing these things, can certainly lead to a person's destruction.' And 'A man buries a treasure in a deep pit. But a treasure hidden away like this can be of no use to him. Now a treasure of love for one's neighbour, of piety and of moderation – that is a treasure that no thief can ever steal.' And 'Even when the heavens

crash to the earth, even when the world is swallowed up and destroyed, even then, Ananda, the words of the Buddha remain true.' And in another place the Enlightened One referred to himself as 'a shepherd full of wisdom' who bends down to redirect those of the flock who are wandering towards the abyss.

All these sayings of Buddha are strongly reminiscent of Jesus' sayings, as contained in the Gospels. Could Jesus perhaps have been familiar with the words of the *Lalitavistara*?

John the Baptist baptized at the mouth of the River Jordan, where it flows into the Dead Sea, very near the place where the Essene community was based and where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947. John exhorted the people to repent of their sins and to receive baptism at his hands in the waters of the Jordan. After he was baptized by John, Jesus retired into the desert, where he was subjected to temptation by Satan. Five hundred years earlier, Buddha too was subjected to a series of temptations by Mara, the 'lord of sensory pleasures', as the *Lalitavistara* narrates. To Siddhartha in the middle of his fasting and meditation Mara offered delicious dishes and showed him the riches and distractions of this world, but the contemplative's concentration was not in the least disturbed. Jesus underwent the same test in the desert, with the same result. A similar story of temptation is told of Zarathustra (Zoroaster), and indeed the selfsame theme – relatively well attested in the East – plays a part in many stories of the lives of the Christian saints.

Jesus commanded his disciples to go out and proclaim the message of joy to the House of Israel. Like the Hindu *sannyasis*, the disciples were to take no gold or silver with them, nor any second set of shoes or clothing.

Five hundred years before Jesus, the Buddha used the same command in nominating his first disciples – the noble thirty – as Jesus was to use later: 'Come, follow me!' The disciples renounced everything on the spot and followed him, just as Peter, Andrew and the sons of Zebedee were to follow Jesus so long afterwards.

And like Jesus, the Buddha spoke in parables. Jesus once described how a blind man cannot lead another blind man without both falling into a ditch. In a similar passage the Buddha says: 'When blind people hold on to each other in a line, the one at the front sees nothing, the one in the middle sees nothing, and the one at the end sees nothing!' There is also an equivalent to the parable of the Prodigal Son in the Buddhist scriptures.

Other parables told by Jesus are represented not among the say-

ings of Buddha but in pre-Christian Hindu traditions and proverbs, including, for instance, the famous saying that faith can move mountains. In this way Krishna relocates the mountain Govardhana to protect its inhabitants from the wrath of the god Indra, and in the *Ramayana* the monkey god Hanuman carries a mountain to Sri Lanka. No such image was present in Old Testament traditions.

Attributed to Buddha are many miracles, a number of which are very similar to those described in the New Testament as being performed by Jesus. Buddha and his disciples were invited to attend a wedding in the town of Jambunada. The holy group sat down to a hearty meal but the food, instead of being rapidly reduced as it was consumed, actually increased in quantity and went on increasing, so that even though more and more guests arrived there was enough for the veritable multitude that was there by the end.

Like Jesus, Buddha was regarded as both divine and human. Before his arrival on Earth Buddha exists as a spiritual being among the divine entities in the spiritual world. Of his own free will he descends to Earth in order to benefit it. Like Christ's, his birth is the result of a miracle: angel messengers proclaim that he will be a saviour, and prophesy to his mother: 'All joy to you, Queen Maya, rejoice and be glad, for the child to whom you have given birth is holy!'

Just as the old and pious Simeon has been told he will see the coming of the Messiah, the birth of the Buddha is prophesied by the saintly old Asita who, shortly before he dies, comes to the newborn child, takes him in his arms, and declares:

> This is the peerless One, pre-eminent among men . . . He will attain to the ultimate height of enlightenment. He has knowledge of the supreme Will. It is he who will set the Wheel of Doctrine in motion. He has had compassion on the struggles of humankind. The faith he founds will spread all over the world.

Simeon, it will be recalled, likewise takes the holy child in his arms and says,

> Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
> For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
> Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
> A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
> (Luke 2:29–32)

Even relatively cautious scholars are convinced that this speech has a direct precedent in Buddhism.

At school, the young Prince Siddhartha is somehow already familiar with all kinds of religious texts. He goes off on a short excursion of his own, is missed, and is then found deep in meditation. The parallels with the twelve-year-old Jesus' being discovered in learned debate with scriptural experts in the Temple while his parents have been looking for him are so obvious they cannot be mistaken.

Buddha begins teaching publicly at about the age of thirty, the age at which Christ began to do the same. Like Jesus, Buddha travels the country together with his principal disciples in voluntary poverty, instructing them meanwhile by using vivid imagery and parables. Like Jesus, Buddha has twelve principal disciples, and his first followers are two brothers – again in an exact parallel with Jesus' first followers.

When called by Buddha, his first companions are sitting under a fig tree, and it is when sitting under a bo or pipal tree (another species of fig) that Buddha attains enlightenment. To Buddhists the bo tree (*Ficus religiosa*) remains the most important symbol of the quest for enlightenment. Jesus too first lights upon the disciple Nathanael sitting under a fig tree. Both Buddha and Christ have one favourite disciple and one disciple who betrays him – and, like Judas Iscariot, Buddha's enemy Devadatta comes to a wretched end (although his plot fails, whereas Judas' does not).

As strongly as Jesus criticizes the Pharisees, the Orthodox Jewish believers who cling steadfastly to the letter of the Mosaic Law, Buddha criticizes the priestly caste of the Brahmans whose orthodoxy has been reduced to meaningless ritual and officious regulations. 'Like arrogant apprentices in a trade they are still learning, the priests are forever widening their web of regulations and are at the root of every evil scheme.' Of the Pharisees, Jesus similarly says, 'They bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do for to be seen of men' (Matthew 23:4–5). In just the way that Buddha characterizes the Brahmans – 'Inside you are like rough wood, though your outer appearance is smooth' – Jesus lays open the hypocrisy of the Pharisees: 'You are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness' (Matthew 23:27).

Just as Buddha rejects the blood sacrifice performed by some

Brahmans, Jesus denounces the blood sacrifice of the Jews. And just as Buddha slates shallow notions of what is pure and what is impure and how ritual ablutions may or may not be efficacious, Jesus censures anything that is insincere and ostentatious.

Despite all attempts at obscuring the true origins of Jesus' teaching, and despite the compression of the Gospels into strict conformity along different lines, more than one hundred passages[23] in the New Testament may be cited that exhibit evidence of sources that hark back to a much older tradition: Buddhism.

Buddhist Thought in the Teachings of Jesus

Affinities between the ethical teachings of Jesus and of Buddha are well known. Both forbid murder, theft, bearing false witness and illicit sexual relations. Both insist that elders must be held in great respect. Both aim to overcome evil with good. Both preach love of one's enemy. Both value peace of mind and peaceable intent. Both advise against the laying up of futile 'treasures upon earth'. And both advocate mercy for sacrificial victims. The parallels are many, and some texts of both faiths coincide virtually word for word.

Like Jesus, Buddha called himself a 'Son of Man', and just as Jesus may be described as the Light of the World, so Buddha is acclaimed in the titles 'Eye of the World' and 'Incomparable Light'.

Buddha's understanding of himself and his role differs little from Christ's understanding of his own nature and place. 'I know God and the Kingdom of Heaven and the Way that leads there,' says Buddha, 'I know it as well as one who has entered the *Brahmaloka* (the Kingdom of God) and has been born there.' And 'Those who believe in me and love me are certain to reach Paradise. Those who believe in me can be sure of salvation.' This is remarkably similar to the promises of Jesus recorded in John's Gospel: 'He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life' (John 5:24). And 'He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live' (John 11:25).

Buddha says to his disciples, 'Those who have ears to hear, let them hear.' He performs miracles: the sick are healed, the blind regain their sight, the deaf hear again, and the crippled walk freely. He steps across the Ganges in flood just as Jesus walks across the

waters of the lake. And it is eventually given to Jesus' disciples to perform miracles, just like their predecessors, the disciples of Buddha.

On one occasion Buddha came to the bank of a river. From the opposite bank a disciple who had been unable to find a boat began walking across on top of the water towards him, just as Peter once approached Jesus by walking on the water. And in the same way that Peter began to sink when his faith started to waver, Buddha's disciple began to sink when his meditative concentration on Buddha was disturbed. Peter was saved by the supporting words and arm of Jesus, and Buddha's disciple was saved when he managed to regain his absorption in contemplating the Master. The people who witnessed the individual events were astounded. Buddha said, 'It is faith that leads us across the floodwaters, wisdom brings us safe to the other side.' Walking on water is a concept quite unheard of in Jewish traditions, but is a theme that is widespread in India: it is more than possible that the New Testament adopted the idea from there.

Like Jesus, however, the Buddha would have no truck with miracles designed merely to cater to people's craving for sensations. To a yogi who had spent twenty-five effortful years in trying to acquire the ability to cross a river without getting his feet wet, the Buddha said 'Have you really been wasting so much time on such a minor matter? All you ever needed was a small coin, and the ferryman would have taken you across in his boat.'

But at a later date, the miracle stories of Buddha in the tradition of Mahayana Buddhism were accorded a status equal in importance to the miracles of Jesus in Christianity. At all times and in all places, people have been more easily impressed by miracles, signs and magical spectacles than by spiritual truths, especially when the spiritual truths are difficult to take in.

There is one particular story that represents perhaps the most amazing parallel of all between the older Buddhist texts and the New Testament. In Christian terms it is the parable of the Widow's Mite. According to the Buddhist version, there is a religious assembly at which the faithful are required to make financial donations. The wealthier members of the congregation give generously and in valuable coin. There is a poor widow, however, whose total possessions amount only to two small coins, and these she duly gives, and with pleasure. The presiding priest perceives her noble gesture and publicly praises her for making it, saying nothing at all about the other donations.

The corresponding passage in Mark's Gospel tells it this way:

> And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money in the treasury: and many that were rich cast in much.
>
> And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.
>
> And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury:
>
> For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living.
>
> (Mark 12:41–44)

Apart from the fact that the basic theme is identical in both versions, there are some especially striking coincidental details. In both versions the story is about a widow. Both make their offering at a religious assembly together with rich people. Both give all they possess, namely two coins. And each is subsequently praised by someone present who values her sacrifice much more highly than the donations of the rich. So close are the versions that it would be difficult to believe that the later (Christian) one was somehow invented quite independently of the earlier (Buddhist) one.

Parallels between Buddhism and Christianity are discernible not just in the words and deeds of their founders but also in other aspects of the two religions after their founders' respective deaths. Myth and legend surround the two central characters in such a way that, soon after they die, Buddha and Jesus are elevated above all the lesser deities and stories of miracles proliferate and spread. In both cases the disciples at first fail to establish any organized religious community for the faith, operating instead in small, scattered groups. Quite soon, theological disputes break out between groups with different backgrounds: between Sthaviras and Mahasanghikas, and between Jewish Christians and Hellenist Christians. In both religions Councils are convened, one in Rajagriha, one in Jerusalem. And just as the Orthodox Buddhists formalized their doctrine at the Council of Pataliputra (in 241 BC) 250 years after Buddha's death, so did the Christian Church at the Council of Nicea (AD 325), 300 years after Jesus was last seen in Palestine.

At the time Jesus was living and teaching in Palestine, the Mahayana school of Buddhism had just evolved from the rather self-oriented Hinayana. It was Mahayana that turned Buddhism

into a universal religion, open to believers of every nation and background. Mahayana philosophy focuses on compassion for all beings, as embodied in the ideal of the Bodhisattva, a concept that took shape in the third century BC. The Bodhisattva is the Englightened One who defers his merging with the Universal Being, who postpones his entry into *nirvana*, for as long as it takes for him to lead every person and being to salvation. The earthly existence of a Bodhisattva has the single purpose of leading all souls on to the path of release (*moksha*), the path that constitutes liberation from the cycle of rebirths and from the distractions of the world and physicality.

All those qualities that characterize a Bodhisattva are to be found in Jesus, down to the last detail. Jesus is by himself the epitome of the Bodhisattva ideal.

Was Jesus an Orthodox Jew?

A Jew among Jews, Jesus is sometimes held to be representative of the Judaism of his time and local culture. But in no way can the epithets 'traditional' and 'orthodox' be applied to him in a religious sense. In regard particularly to the subjects of death, the family, the Law, and indeed Jewish tradition, there are fundamental differences that distinguish his outlook from Orthodox Judaism. It would not be unfair to say, even, that Jesus debunked all that was most sacred to traditional Jewish culture!

This is especially the case in relation to death and the family. In four successive verses Luke reports how Jesus considers personal freedom to worship and a love for God to be of more importance than first the conventional burial rites and second the duties inherent in being one of a family.

> And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.
>
> Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.
>
> And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.
>
> And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.
>
> (Luke 9:59–62)

Whenever Jesus' teaching and activities touch upon family matters, they tend 'to offend Jewish feelings', as the Jewish historian C. G. Montefiore has put it.[24] 'If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, . . . he cannot be my disciple' (Luke 14:26). 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (Matthew 10:37). Especially contrary – and incomprehensible – to the Jewish tradition is the passage in Matthew's Gospel in which Jesus verbally disowns his own mother:

> While he yet talked to the people, behold, his mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him.
>
> Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.
>
> But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren?
>
> And he stretched forth his hand toward his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren!
>
> (Matthew 12:46–49)

The same Jesus in whose name 'crusades for the family' have been organized evaded his own family when they wanted to talk to him. And it is Matthew – the writer of a Gospel from a Jewish standpoint, of all people – who quotes Jesus as making a statement that is unique for the ancient world and particularly scandalous to the Jews: 'I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.' And in a strange anticipation of Freudian theory, he adds: 'And a man's foes shall be they of his own household' (Matthew 10:35–36).

Viewed against the background of contemporary Jewish culture, such behaviour on the part of Jesus – casting off family ties and severing bonds held to be sacrosanct – may be considered nothing short of baffling even today. Yet this same attitude is precisely that of the Buddhist striving after complete liberation from the desires and distractions of the worldly self. To gain release from the sufferings of this earthly life, all personal attachments must be forgone, as must any cultural niceties that represent similar hindrances. The individual human person remains a prisoner of the cycle of rebirths for as long as he is unable to free himself from selfish desires. Jesus found himself constantly chafing against the Jewish Law, which seemed to him in any case to be expounded in futile and vacuous terms, and his decisive rebuttal of the importance of

the Sabbath was enough finally to lead to his Crucifixion.

Had Jesus really intended to lead a godly life as understood by the contemporary Orhtodox Jews, or even to become a rabbi, he would have to have been married – especially at his mature age. Matthew, however, leaves no doubt at all that Jesus remained single (19:12).

And Jesus would have to have been circumcised, as required for all male Jews as the sign of the Covenant between Yahweh-Jehovah and Abraham.[25] Only circumcised men were permitted to take part in the meal commemorating the Passover, and no uncircumcised man was allowed to enter the Lord's sanctuary in the Temple.[26] Anyone who refused to be circumcised was held to be in breach of the Covenant and was expelled, 'cut off from his people' (Genesis 17:14). Yet the Gospels do not actually state whether Jesus was circumcised or not. Luke 2:21 merely says that when Jesus was eight days old and the statutory circumcision was due, he was given his name. There is no definitive declaration that he really was circumcised.

The apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas* relates a saying of Jesus on the subject of circumcision:

> His disciples asked him, 'Circumcision – is there any real point in it or not?' He answered, 'If it was really important, your heavenly Father would have seen to it that you came into the world already circumcised from your mother's womb. But certainly, circumcision in spirit may well be of great importance.'
>
> (Logion 53)[27]

The Essenes are known to have recognized only such a 'spiritual circumcision', and not to have required the physical removal of the foreskin. In this way Paul, who was strongly opposed to circumcision as a religious requirement, managed to override the objections of the Jewish Christians and to get the rescinding of the obligation affirmed by the apostles at the Council of Jerusalem.

Successors to the Essenes and Nazarenes

In the struggle for dominance that took place between the many Paulinist, Gnostic and Jewish-Christian groupings during the early centuries of the present era, it was the Church of Rome, as organized in hierarchy and in form by Paul, that finally emerged as the

victor following the Emperor Constantine's conversion to Christianity in AD 313. Three hundred years later it found itself under pressure as a new religion pressed forcefully from the south into Asia Minor: Islam succeeded in winning over much of the population of the area within a surprisingly short space of time.

But what became of the groups who were unwilling to submit to the authority of the Pope in Rome and the Emperor in Byzantium – the Essenes and Nazarenes, the hard-core Jewish Christians (Ebionites), the Gnostics, Manicheans and neo-Platonists? Did they simply disappear, absorbed without trace either into the Church of Rome or into mainstream Islam?

A large number of different tribal communities, clans and sects still live today among the mountains of Asia Minor, Syria and Kurdistan, who are regarded as potentially trouble-making heretics by orthodox Muslims, and who, when not called simply Shiites, may be known instead under the collective name of *Alawites*[28] (because the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, Ali, is accorded a special place in their beliefs).

These Alawites include, for example, the Bektashi dervishes of Anatolia and the Nusairis of the coastal mountains of Syria. The name of the latter group is thought by many authorities to derive from *Nazarene* or *Nazoraian*, or from the name *Nasara* or *Nasrani* that was applied to the first Christians in Palestine.[29] And there are the better-known Druse communities of the Lebanon mountains, and the Yazidi of Kurdistan, who are disparagingly called devil-worshippers by orthodox Muslims.

Until modern times outsiders, including scholarly researchers, knew virtually nothing about the religious beliefs of these groups, all of whom claimed to be dedicated Muslims, and all of whom swore those intiated into the mysteries of their faiths to absolute secrecy, on pain of the severest penalties. Only very recently did several of these tribal communities, particularly some groups in Turkey,[30] open their doors to the outside world to reveal an ancient tradition in which Mediterranean and Anatolian notions of Classical times have been preserved in combination with old Jewish, early Christian and Gnostic views, some of which bear unmistakable parallels both with the Essenes, Nazarenes and Therapeuts, and with ideals of religious life and thought in India.

All these sects typically divide the community into non-initiates (the laity) and initiates (monks). The monks are disposed in three ranks, just like the monks of the Therapeuts and the early Christian clergy.

In Anatolia, the monks who belong to the celibate branch of the Bektashi Order live either in monasteries or as wandering mendicants travelling from place to place on foot. Women too – who are accorded a much more independent mode of life than Muslim women – are accepted into the society of the initiates,[31] and are permitted to participate in the *Jem*, the most important rite of worship, which takes place in the monasteries or in the houses of devout believers. It features a communal meal with bread and wine (very similar to the *agape* meal at the assemblies of the first Christians), a confession of sins before the clergy, and a sacred dance undertaken in an ecstatic state by both men and women.

Candidates for initiation are sprinkled with water by twelve brothers of the Order, and symbolically hanged, as a sign of the death of the old person and the resurrection of the new. The Alawites of western Iran known as Ahl-e Haqq ('People of the truth') even conduct the novice to a spring in which he is then immersed.[32]

The philosophical precepts of these communities are strongly reminiscent of Indian traditions. The universe undergoes an endless cycle of formation and dissolution, called the cycle of being. From a Primary State called Haqq ('Truth') corresponding to the basic state of all things – comparable with the *brahman* of the Hindus, the *shunyata* of the Mahayana, and the Chinese *Tao* – there emanates a Deity in three Persons, who in turn brings forth the primal Logos or World-Intelligence, who is made incarnate among men in every age in order to show them the way to Englightenment. Particularly reverenced examples of such incarnate divinities are Ali and, notably, Jesus. The aim of human life is to gain Enlightenment and pass beyond the cycle of rebirths, so to become a 'person perfected' (*insan-i-kamil*), a reflection or image of God, like Ali or Jesus.[33]

An anthropologist from Luxembourg who had spent many years studying the Kurdish tribespeople of eastern Anatolia once told me that many legends continue to circulate about Jesus' residing in what is now south-eastern Turkey after the Resurrection. According to Persian folklore, he lived at the town of Nisibis, near Edessa, now called Nusaybin and on the Turkish border with Syria. Other scholars record a tradition among the Alawites of Anatolia that Jesus survived the Crucifixion, was nursed back to health by his disciples, and then forever left the territories that were under imperial Roman rule.[34] The lands north, west and south were all in Roman hands, so Jesus can only have migrated east.

Most authorities believe that these tribal communities represent direct descendants of the Essenes and Nazarenes who, after the time of Christ, merged with the Jewish Christians opposed to Paul's dominant Hellenist group, and who, in the interests of survival under Islamic rule, later assumed the guise of an Islamic sect.

There are many points of correspondence in addition to those already mentioned. All the groups celebrate Christian festivals, for example, and especially Easter. Revering Jesus, they also regard John the Baptist and Peter with particular respect, but have no time at all for Paul. They greatly esteem the Gospels of Matthew and John, but treat the (Hellenist) Greek Luke's Gospel with something approaching disdain.

What is even more interesting, perhaps, is that these tribes inhabit the very areas where some of the original Christian communities lived. The Alawites of Turkey, for example, occupy the territory that was once home to the Galatians – a people to whom one of the epistles ascribed in the New Testament to Paul was addressed.

Surely it is possible, then, that these remote communities living in inaccessibly mountainous areas might have preserved the original Christian doctrine in a far less adulterated form than did the Church of Rome with all its emperors, popes and cardinals.[35]

Chapter Six

THE SECRET OF JESUS

'What Manner of Man is This?'

The attempt to pin down the historical figure of Jesus Christ is rather like a physicist's attempt to prove the existence of a subatomic particle and to determine its charge. The particle itself cannot be traced by direct optical means, but over the course of a number of experiments it is possible to record the tracks of other, larger particles with which it has collided, and by following these tracks back to their source, to calculate the forces involved in the collision. The invisible subatomic particle is thus ultimately described by its effect.

In the case of Jesus, there are two additional factors that make the task more difficult. The first is that the Christian Churches have destroyed virtually all the evidence that might be used to reconstruct the events of Jesus' personal history. The other is that Jesus himself was compelled to preserve his secret (the secret of who he really was) throughout his life, in order to keep out of the clutches of his enemies as much as he could. Jesus the person is covered by a veil of mystery and secrecy. An obscuring cloud hangs over the events of his personal life, leaving all too much scope for speculation.

So much ambiguity only makes for eventual and complete bafflement. Our ideas on the nature and personality of Jesus Christ are based not so much on documented biography and historical evidence as on a truth that transcends history while being passed down through history. We inevitably come up against the limits of what seems natural and comprehensible. All our questions ultimately reduce to a single, central question – one that was indeed even posed by Jesus' contemporaries: 'What manner of man is this?' (Mark 4:41).

That there can be such differing perceptions of Jesus must be presumed to stem from the nature of the historical person – a

remarkable and studiously maintained balance between openness and secrecy. Jesus' exhortations to others to keep silent about him, the incapacity of even his own disciples to understand him, and the fact that what the Son of Man actually said was relatively fleeting, have all played a role in this. Those same disciples who had been spending their lives accompanying the Master were able neither to understand him correctly nor to appreciate what he was about. He seemed eccentric and enigmatic, and he was apparently not too concerned about reducing this cryptic aspect to his public life. Even the disciples were expressly bound to silence.

After Peter's revelatory declaration, Jesus 'charged them that they should tell no man of him' (Mark 8:30), and when coming down from the mountain following the Transfiguration, he 'charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen' (Mark 9:9).

There was the same enjoining to secrecy when Jesus healed people. Again and again, Jesus forbade those who were healed to spread the news about the event. He sent away a leper whom he had cured with the words, 'See thou say nothing to any man' (Mark 1:43). And to those present at the awakening of Jairus' daughter 'he charged them straitly that no man should know it' (Mark 5:43). Jesus sent home the man of Bethsaida whose sight he had restored, with the command 'Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town' (Mark 8:26). In spite of all this, the miracles could not be kept secret and soon became very public knowledge. The result was that after the healing of the person who was deaf and dumb, for instance, 'he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it' (Mark 7:36).

Jesus even ordered demons who recognized him as the Holy One of God (cf Mark 1:24; 5:7). He 'suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him' (Mark 1:34). 'And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known' (Mark 3:11–12).

In this way, then, the disciples, those who were healed, and unclean spirits and devils were all forbidden to publicize his actions – indeed, they were given a formal instruction generally to keep very quiet about him. 'And he would not that any man should know it [was he]' (Mark 7:24; 9:30).

The command obviously also applied to the disciples. There seems to have been a great intellectual gulf between Jesus and his

disciples, who were simply unable to fathom him at all. This is particularly evident in Jesus' expressions of exasperation at their total lack of comprehension. Aboard the ship tossed about on the lake by a storm, there came the stern words 'Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have no faith?' (Mark 4:40). And, following the miracle of the loaves, 'Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not yet, neither understand? Have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do ye not remember?' (Mark 8:17–18). And finally, 'How is it that ye do not understand [even now]?' (Mark 8:21). When the disciples' attempt to cure a boy possessed by a 'dumb spirit' turned out to be unsuccessful, Jesus admonishes them with the words, 'O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me' (Mark 9:19). The second of these two questions might be interpreted as implying that Jesus had always intended his mission in Palestine to be of limited duration, and that he could see approaching his return sometime soon to India.

The circumstances surrounding his final public entry into Jerusalem are also puzzling. Why should this son of the common people be hailed with such celebrity in the city if – as the official line goes – he had been sawing planks in his father's carpentry shop all his adult life until his thirtieth year, and so could hardly have been a stranger among the local population? The enthusiastic reception by the people of Palestine rather suggests instead that he had returned after a prolonged absence from far away, with strange and novel teachings, and with such supernatural powers as the ability to perform miracles and to heal the sick.

This also puts the question of the Nazarene Baptist, John, in a new light: 'Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?' (Matthew 11:3).

Reincarnation in the New Testament

According to public opinion statistics gathered in research by the Gallup organization, some 23 per cent of North Americans in 1980–1, and around 21 per cent of Europeans in 1983, believed in the doctrine of reincarnation.[1]

Reincarnation is referred to quite specifically several times in the New Testament, although such references are most often ignored or (possibly deliberately) misunderstood. Belief in reincarnation

was a matter of course to the early Christian communities, until it became the victim of a historic error perpetrated by the Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in AD 533. Declared heretical, it has since remained banned from 'Christian' doctrine to this day.

The idea of rebirth was widespread throughout the Graeco-Roman world of classical antiquity. The great Greek philsopher and mathematician Pythagoras (around 570–496 BC), a contemporary of Buddha, was a firm believer in the transmigration of souls, and there are quite a few legends that tell of his travelling to India.[2] Plato (427–347 BC) was likewise a disciple of reincarnation, and rebirth also plays a central role in the philosophy of the Stoics. The Roman poets Virgil and Plutarch, contemporaries of Jesus, believed that the souls of people who were somehow tied to the physical world of the flesh would be reborn in a new body when the old body died.

In ancient North Africa, in Asia Minor and in the Middle East, from Anatolia and Egypt to Persia, the notions of the transmigration of souls and rebirth were taken for granted. The Old Testament contains clear examples of a belief in the rebirth of the soul in another body. According to Psalm 90:3, God 'turnest man to destruction; and sayest, Return ye children of men'. Friedrich Weinreb even interprets a passage in the Book of Jonah as describing regressive reincarnation in the form of cattle, and also tells of a reincarnation of Nimrod. Weinreb explains the Jewish concept of the God-soul *nshamah*, the divine and perfect spirit that is equally in all humans, certain characteristic aspects of which from time to time make an appearance.[3]

By AD 30 the Jews were quite familiar with the doctrine of the transmigration of souls, which they called Gilgal ('Wheel', 'Cycle'). As Jerome, the Doctor of the Chuch, reports, the Gilgal doctrine was common knowledge among the first Christians. Under the heading 'Reincarnation in the Jewish Talmud', Meyer's *Konversationslexikon* – a standard German encyclopaedia published in 1907 – declares:

> The Jews of the time of Christ held a general belief in the transmigration of souls. The authors of the Talmud took it for granted that God had created a finite number of Jewish souls that would continue to return to an earthly existence for as long as there were Jews, if occasionally in the form of an animal in order to teach a soul a lesson. But all would be purified on the Last Day, and rise in the bodies of the righteous in the Promised Land.
>
> (*Konversationslexicon* Vol.18, p.263)

The Old Testament actually ends with a prophecy (made in about 870 BC) announcing the reincarnation of Elijah: 'Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord' (Malachi 4:5).

Nearly nine centuries later, an angel appears to Zacharias and announces the birth of a son:

> But the angel said unto him, Fear not, Zacharias: for thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elisabeth shall bear thee a son, and thou shalt call his name John.
>
> And thou shalt have joy and gladness; and many [!] shall rejoice at his birth.
>
> For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.
>
> And many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord their God.
>
> And he shall go before him in the spirit and power of Elias [*Elias* is just a Greek version of the Hebrew *Elijah*], to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children . . .
>
> (Luke 1:13–17)

Jesus himself was later to state that John the Baptist was Elijah/Elias:

> For this is he, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.
>
> Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. . . .
>
> For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.
>
> And if ye will receive it, this is Elias, which was for to come.
>
> (Matthew 11:10–11, 13–14)

According to John 1:21, when asked by the priests and Levites, the Baptist replies that he is not Elias. Leaving aside for the moment any speculation on what might constitute a tangible reason for such a negative response by John the Baptist over whether he was or was not Elijah/Elias, the most significant thing about it is that the religious authorities evidently thought it quite possible that he was indeed the new incarnation of Elijah/Elias.

We are nowhere told how John the Baptist spent his youth – that is, where he was educated. There is only the one succinct sentence in Luke: 'And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel' (Luke 1:80).

It is not inconceivable, therefore, that John too was recognized as a reincarnation of a particularly holy soul, and likewise given direct monastic training in far-off India. If this were the case, 'preparing a path for the Lord' would have had a more than figurative meaning.

On another occasion, Jesus asks his disciples: 'Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God' (Matthew 16:13–16).

And the disciples asked Jesus, 'Why then say the scribes that Elias must first come? And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things. But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist' (Matthew 17:10–13).

According to the Gospels, then, Jesus himself confirmed that the soul of Elijah/Elias had been reborn in human form as John. Elijah/Elias had tried to foster monotheism at the royal court, and had taught that God does not manifest himself in fire and destruction but in 'a still, small voice' – that is in reflective and patient calm.

The first Elijah dressed himself in the rags typical of a wandering monk, was nourished miraculously, and was permitted to perform miracles himself – notably to multiply quantities of food and to raise the dead to life. Given the mission of anointing others, he spoke of being a 'messenger' and attracted a vast flock of followers. Finally, he disappeared in so mysterious a manner (ascending heavenwards in a whirlwind) that he was sought by fifty men for three days but could not be found.

The followers of Jesus knew that Jesus was a reincarnation, but were still not sure about his identity and offered several suggestions. Jesus himself gives no direct reply to the speculations, but he does confirm the disciples' ideas indirectly by encouraging their enquiry: 'But who do you say I am?' There are also significant descriptions in the New Testament (Matthew 14:1–2; 16:13–14; Mark 6:14–16; Luke 9:7–9) of the conjectures of various people, including Herod, as to whose soul Jesus might represent the reincarnation of. All these passages definitively prove that reincarnation was a widespread belief at the time. According to Josephus,

the Pharisees believed in 'the power of . . . those returning to life',[3] and that the souls of the good pass on to another body.[5]

In the account of Jesus' healing of a man blind from birth (John 9), the disciples expressly ask, 'Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind?' The idea that someone could have been born blind because of sin committed previously naturally carries with it the implication of a life lived before and a subsequent rebirth. A further and simultaneous implication in the question is the sublime concept of *karma* (the Sanskrit term for 'action' or 'causation'), by which the actions undertaken in one life profoundly affect the conditions and circumstances of the next life.

Again, the concept of reincarnation is evident in the third chapter of John's Gospel. When Jesus meets the Pharisee Nicodemus, he greets this 'ruler of the Jews' with the words: 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Taken aback, Nicodemus replies: 'How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God' (John 3:3–5).

The clearest reference in the New Testament to reincarnation is found in the Epistle of James (3:6, quoted here in the *Jerusalem Bible* version), where it says that the tongue 'is a whole wicked world in itself: it infects the whole body; catching fire itself from hell, it sets fire to the whole wheel of creation'. The translation of the last phrase that appears in most English Bibles is 'the course of nature', 'the wheel of our existence', or some equally nebulous expression that distorts the sense of the original Greek words, which literally mean 'cycle of being' or 'wheel of living', and in which the word for 'being' and 'living' is *genesis*, related to the verb 'to come into being', 'to be born' – so corresponding exactly to the Indian doctrine of the wheel of rebirth (*samsara chakra*), which is set in flames like the 'cycle of being' of James' Epistle. Most theologians interpret this passage in the text as 'showing Gnostic influence', and the doctrine propounded by the Gnostics – or so all the modern Christian Churches, denominations and authorities would have us believe – is not only non-Christian but fundamentally opposed to the teaching of Jesus . . .

Christianity and the Gnostics

In the theological writings of the early Christian Church, and in other contemporary documents, there are many examples of a relationship between Christian and Indian thought in the first centuries after Christ. Numerous references at the hands of the Fathers of the Church of the time may today be interpreted as demonstrating the doctrine of reincarnation, despite all the literary tampering that went on later.[6] Eusebius, the first writer of Church history, tells us that Pantainos – the founder of the famous theological school at Alexandria – had lived in India before beginning work as a theologian.[7]

Trade between the Roman Empire and India flourished during the first century of our era, and the centre for this trade was the city of Alexandria. Along with the wares of commerce, Indian ideas also found their way to Alexandria, so permeating local political and religious thought. By that time Christianity had not yet become the monolithic and highly stratified Church it was later to be; it was instead made up of many individual groups, each of which was affiliated to any of various schools of philosophy, and many of them to those that were eventually to be unceremoniously grouped within the description 'Gnostic'. Most of the Gnostic doctrines were later condemned as heresies by the Church Councils, but some sects still survived into the Middle Ages, until the last of their followers (the Cathars, the Albigensians and the Bogomils) were brutally eradicated by the autocratic Church of Rome. Common to all these Gnostic groups was a strong faith in Jesus and in reincarnation. Many learned authorities have contended that the very early Christians and the Gnostics were originally part of the same movement, and that the celebrated antagonism between the two groups was a falsification of history on the part of Church leaders at a much later date.[8] This contention has never convincingly been refuted. Indeed, a number of commentators even believe that there was a Buddhist colony in Alexandria at the time.[9]

Whether there was or not, at that very early stage, it remains an uncontested fact that in the second century AD a delegation of Buddhist monks from Egypt took part in a major Buddhist conference in Sri Lanka.

The followers of the Buddha in Alexandria during the decades either side of Jesus' birth, if there were any, certainly did not call themselves Buddhists. Instead, they would probably have used the

name adopted by their brothers in India: the followers of the *Dharma* (the universal Law and the teaching of Buddha). In Greek, the word *Dharma* may be translated as *Logos*, 'Word', and adherents of this teaching could therefore be described as Logicians. One group of Gnostics was in fact actually known as the Logicians.

The famous introduction to John's Gospel – 'In the beginning was the Word . . .' – thus has a literary form that is by no means unlike a quotation from Buddhist scriptures, 'The essence [of all things] is the Dharma . . .', especially in that the Greek word used for 'beginning', *arche*, can have other meanings, notably 'origin', 'principle' and 'mastery', and that the Greek imperfect form of the verb 'to be' – translated simply as 'was' – suggests a continuation of the action through to the present.

The most sacred authority in Buddhism is the trinity represented by Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha. Christian theology has the Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, of whom the Son, the second Person, is equated with the Logos (that is to say the Dharma), and the third Person, the Holy Spirit, is active in the community of the faithful (the Sangha).

The concept of a Holy Trinity, a Deity in three Persons or manifestations, has existed in religious doctrine since the dawn of history, from Egypt to eastern Asia. It was in this mode that the ancient Egyptians of early dynasties conceived their prime trinity of a sun god, an earth mother and (a combined) sun-over-earth son. The Chinese equivalent was the trinity of Heaven, Earth and the human individual made perfect (represented by the Emperor, the Son of Heaven). The Hindu Trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva, although it appears to have developed as such only during medieval times, is rooted in much older ideas of the Three. In Vedic philosophy, the core of modern Hinduism, God or the Deity is described as Sat ('Existence', pronounced 'saht' [see Appendix]), Chit ('Awareness') and Ananda ('Blessedness'), the three of which have clear parallels with the Persons of the Christian Trinity.

Gnostic thought is to be found everywhere in early Christianity, and notably in the letters of Paul – especially in the letter to the Ephesians (which may well not be by Paul, admittedly) – and in the Gospel of John. Because almost all the 'heretical' writings were destroyed by the Church, hardly any original texts outlining Gnostic beliefs have survived. What little does remain includes the *Pistis Sophia* (Greek: 'Faith Wisdom'), the Books of Jeu and the Coptic library of Nag Hammadi from the 4th century AD, which turned up in 1945 by means of a discovery much like that of the

Dead Sea Scrolls.

Despite the longstanding denial of any connection between the early Christians and the Gnostics by the historical authorities of the Christian Church, it remains an incontrovertible fact that a number of theological concepts that came to be part of the orthodox doctrine of the Church of Rome actually originated within the confines of the Gnostic culture resident in Alexandria, in which the first great Christian theologians Clement (around 150–214) and Origen (about 185–254) lived and worked. It has been proved that Clement of Alexandria was familiar not only with the spiritual culture of India but even with the teaching of Buddha.[10] His understanding of the transmigration of souls speaks for itself:

> Yet we exist before the foundation of the world, we who are already present even before then through our being in God; we, the creatures given the knowledge of the divine Logos, through whom we are most ancient . . .[11]
>
> For as each such birth follows the previous one, we are led in gradual progression to Immortality.[12]

Clement's pupil and successor was Origen, the founder of systematic Christian theology, one of whose teachers was a mysterious individual named Ammonius Sakkas, or Ammonius the Saka. The Sakas were a people of northern India, and the Indian antecedents of Ammonius are beyond doubt, but many authorities today believe that the epithet *Sakkas* does not actually mean 'the Saka', but that it more probably refers to Sakya or Sakyamuni – to the fact that Ammonius was a Buddhist monk.[13]

If this is the case, then the most important theologian of early Christianity after Augustine was the pupil of a Buddhist monk from India, and many of the images and metaphors that he uses in his theological works ought to be viewed as taken directly from Buddhism. Unfortunately only a fragment of Origen's writings have survived. Most of his manuscripts were later destroyed precisely because he was prepared to show great tolerance towards people of differing views, and especially because of his belief in reincarnation. What remains is his major opus *De Principiis*, an attempt at a systematic presentation of Christian teachings (in the edited Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia), his treatise *Contra Celsum*, and a 'Commentary on Matthew'.

Two passages from his writings suffice to demonstrate his belief in the existence of the soul before birth, and the influence of actions undertaken previously:

> Every soul . . . enters this world strengthened by the victories or weakened by the stumblings of its previous life. Its place in this world . . . is determined by what it has earlier gained or discarded.[14]
>
> Does it not make absolute sense that every soul . . . is guided into a body, and this in accordance with deeds done earlier? . . . The soul makes use of a body for a certain duration . . , but as it changes, the body becomes less suited to it and it then exchanges it for another one.[15]

Similar statements are made by many other Christian theologians in the period prior to the Council of Constantinople in 553. Gregory of Nyssa (about 334–391) was one:

> The soul needs to undergo a kind of healing process in order to be cleansed of stains caused by sin. In the present life, virtue is the remedy that is applied to heal these scars. If they remain incurable in the present life, then the healing treatment is continued in a future life.[16]

The Anathema of Justinian

Almost every Christian historian to date has put forward the view that the doctrine of reincarnation was declared a heresy (anathematized) by formal decree at the Council of Constantinople in the year 553. A closer look at the real circumstances, however, reveals that any idea of a formal decree by the Council just does not stand up to investigation. The doctrine of reincarnation was in fact condemned by no more than a mere personal veto by the Emperor Justinian, and the anathematization was never part of Council resolutions.

Justinian's wife (according to the historian Procopius) was the ambitious, not to say power-crazed, daughter of a bearguard at the amphitheatre in Byzantium. She began her meteoric rise, eventually to lead to her becoming ruler of the empire, as a courtesan. As soon as she became Empress, in order to break the ties with her ignoble past and to foster an austerely moral image, she ordered the torture and execution of 500 of her erstwhile courtesan colleagues. Then, in an endeavour to avoid suffering the dread consequences of such cruel deeds in a subsequent life according to the laws of *karma* and reincarnation, she set about applying all her influence to have the doctrine of the cycle of rebirths formally abolished. She was apparently quite convinced that an edict promulgated by the 'divine decree' of the Emperor anathematizing

the doctrine as a heresy would altogether absolve her from all culpability. In addition, both the Emperor and his wife were intent on bolstering Constantinople's supremacy of spiritual and temporal authority over Rome and the Bishop of Rome – which also goes a long way towards explaining how an imperial decree anathematizing the doctrines held by Origen and his counterparts came to be promulgated without the endorsement of the Pope and the Roman bishops of the West.

The Emperor Justinian had already declared war on the teachings of Origen in AD 543 when, without bothering to consult the Pope, he had them condemned as heretical by a specially convened synod. Ten years later he assembled a Council in Constantinople, only afterwards to become known as the Fifth Ecumenical Council. Hardly 'ecumenical', it could only just be described as a 'council', for it was little more than an ego-trip for Justinian, who saw himself as the head of the Eastern Church and was trying to consolidate this claim to power in relation to the Bishop of Rome in the West. Of the 165 bishops present, a mere dozen were from Roman dioceses; all other Western bishops specifically refused to take part in the Council. The Eastern (Orthodox) bishops who made up the numbers were feudal vassals and in no position to resist the pressure the Emperor put on them. Pope Vigilius himself – although he was visiting Constantinople at the time – also stayed away from the Council in protest.

As had happened at the earlier synod of the Eastern Church in 543, the Emperor once more had Origen's teaching on reincarnation condemned at this assembly, and fifteen anathemata (ecclesiastical proscriptions) were issued against him.

The formal procedures, however, required that official protocols of the eight Council sessions (which lasted four weeks altogether) were presented to the Pope for his ratification. Constrained by the Emperor, the ambitious Pope Vigilius (who had only been made Pope at the insistence of the Empress in AD 537) finally wavered, and appended his signature to the Council decrees laid before him. The significant thing about this, though, is that the documents given to the Pope for his signature concerned only an indictment of three scholars who had been pronounced heretics by Justinian, and against whom the Emperor had already issued an edict four years before (an affair generally known as the 'episode of the Three Chapters'). But there was no mention of Origen in them. The succeeding Popes Pelagius I (556–561), Pelagius II (579–590) and Gregory I (590–604) were soon afterwards to speak of the Fifth

Council without referring once to Origen, even in passing. Somehow the conviction that Justinian's anathema – 'Eternal damnation to anyone who preaches the spurious pre-existence of the soul and its unnatural rebirth' – had been part of the Council's resolutions became lodged fast in ecclesiastical lore. A scrupulous examination of the historical events and the documentation pertaining to them makes it perfectly clear that the supposed ban on the doctrine of reincarnation is nothing more than an error of what is now well over a millennium's standing.

By about 1900, an American by the name of James Morgan Pryse had already come up with a complete list of references to the doctrine of reincarnation in the New Testament.[17] Pryse considered that the doctrine proceeded quite naturally from fundamental insights of the ancient world, through the teachings of the old philosophers, and so on (just as naturally) to appear in the New Testament. That the spiritual priciple behind human existence and the spiritual principle behind the existence of the entire universe (microcosm and macrocosm) are fundamentally one and the same means that all elements, forces and processes exist within the individual person, both in a physical and material sense and in a spiritual and divine sense. This concept reveals the spiritual unity of all beings: there is no separation between Nature and God. It reveals the Deity in all and as all, at all times, in each minute particle of the universe.

The human individual in physical form is a manifestation emanating from the realm of the undifferentiated, boundless and timeless Divine Unity which materializes Itself according to cyclical phases in various forms of being.

The essential and primordial Being is eternally changeless, whereas Nature – or the universe – is a Coming Into Being, a Being in continuous flux.

The soul – or the spirit – of Man is thus, in its deepest consciousness, everlasting, whereas in its constant coming and going (reincarnation) it is subject to a continuous sequence of action: of causes and effects.

In order to return finally to the divine state, Man must become aware of this principle, and take active steps to attain mastery over the material aspects of his existence. After a lengthy sequence of lives, a state may be reached in which all karmic suffering resulting from these periods of earthly existence is surmounted, and in ultimate perfection the inner or spiritual self merges into the Eternal Unity.

This is how the doctrine of reincarnation might be summed up in a few words.

Through knowledge, insight, meditation, asceticism, contemplative absorption, renunciation, and similar disciplines, it is possible to overcome the narrow restrictions of bodily life while still on earth, so to become aware of one's divine nature. Matthew's Gospel describes the goal in this way: 'Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect' (Matthew 5:48). But the path to perfection is paved with many reincarnations, until the individual is fully awakened to being the child of God and performs the works of a Christ:

> Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake.
>
> Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do.
>
> (John 14:11–12)

Jesus, to me, is an ideal example of the Boddhisattva – that is, a Buddha in the making; a person who, standing at the gates of total Enlightenment, voluntarily returns to be born again out of compassion for human beings. Jesus is already very close to that divine state, having discarded all personal ties and selfish effort. He fully perceives that earthly existence, the cycle of rebirths determined by *karma*, is the cause of all suffering; he has preached to his disciples the conscious renunciation of worldly life; and he has shown them the way to Englightenment through 'right action' and the creation of good *karma*. 'The survival of Western humanity depends on the reintroduction of the concept of *karma* to the minds of the populace at large', as Paul Brunton said, and if we can become (once more) acquainted with the ideas of *karma* and reincarnation, it opens up completely new dimensions in understanding Jesus, showing us the way ahead, towards a coming age, even without a 'resurrection of the body'.

Miracles – of Jesus, and in India

To a casual observer, the miracles performed by Jesus may by themselves seem unique and without precedent. But behind many extraordinary, spectacular and inexplicable events throughout human history – some useful or even beneficial, others harmful or

even catastrophic – people have tended to see the workings of a mysterious Force unknown in nature and beyond human understanding. From the very first primitive magical rites performed to appease deities of the earliest forms of religion, Man has interested himself in such inexplicable phenomena, and he continues to do so today.

Jesus' 'magical' powers were apparently considered nothing out of the ordinary enough to warrant mention by contemporary historians. During Jesus' lifetime wonder-workers, faith healers and outright charlatans were common everywhere. What was different about Jesus was primarily the fact that he did not practise his arts in a bid for fame and fortune.

The stories of the miracles in the New Testament – around thirty of them altogether – stem largely from the religious traditions of the contemporary communities of the area, and so are not verifiable historically. Reports outlining Jesus' activities as an exorcist are older, however, and were certainly current in Jesus' own time.

For thousands of years, whether miracles were actually possible was a question that was never asked. It first arose as a matter for speculation during the Renaissance, when a new scientific curiosity about the world started to manifest itself. Not until the seventeenth century did anyone attempt to find a rational explanation for some of the miracles described in the Gospels. Rationalists, however, are prepared to accept only phenomena that accord with natural laws and are intelligible to the scientifically enquiring mind. Miracles are thus phenomena for which causal relationships are neither understood nor explicable. Today, scientists are daily discovering completely new laws in the workings of natural processes, and constantly solving puzzles that were considered unfathomable, if not magical, the day before.

Theologians define a Christian miracle as 'the suspension of the action of a law of nature by God himself'.

In contrast, the occultist does not believe in the suspension of a law but maintains that miraculous phenomena are subject to higher laws that have not yet been discovered and defined. Everything that happens in our universe occurs in accordance with law and can be explained. The so-called magical powers of the initiate are therefore no more than the natural consequence of his better knowledge of how natural laws and these higher laws that derive from the inner realm of consciousness may be played off against each other.

Neither in the Old Testament nor in the New (in the original

languages) is the term 'miracle' used. The scriptures instead speak of 'signs', 'power' or the 'marvellous deeds of God'.

The most important Hebrew word *el* (and *elohim*), for example, which derives from the Semitic root *alah* 'to be strong', means 'the great Power'. The word that describes this holy miracle-working power is thus derived from the same source as the word for 'God'.

There are similar connections in Indo-European languages. The first element of the Sanskrit word *brahman* can be traced back to the triconsonantal root *brh* 'to extend', thus 'to expand', 'to radiate (light)', 'to have power over', and 'to be strong'.

The miracles of Jesus seem to have been performed largely on compassionate grounds: the healing of the sick, the mentally deranged and the physically handicapped. But he evidently performed other types of miracle when necessary: he transformed water into wine, multiplied quantities of food, made himself invisible, raised the 'dead', and walked on water (levitated).

As with the other stories about Jesus, there are of course parallels and literary precedents for the miracle stories in both European and Asian traditions. Pliny tells of the miraculous cures of the Greek doctor Asclepiades (124–about 60 BC). Tacitus and Suetonius report on miraculous healings performed even by the Emperor Vespasian. The early Christian apostles were also able to heal the sick and perform various different miracles, and during the first century AD Apollonius of Tyana worked similar and other wonders.

But for the earliest reports of miracles identical to those performed by Jesus, the prime source comprises the stories of Krishna in the post-Vedic literature of India, the *Puranas* (especially the *Bhagavata Purana* and the *Mahabharata*). Krishna is the eighth avatar of the god Vishnu, and to the majority of Vaishnavite Hindus who worship Vishnu (Sanskrit root *vish* 'to pervade') as the supreme Lord, his incarnate form Krishna is the Saviour. The Rig Veda is too early a work for Vishnu to be depicted as deity made human, so he is there a manifestation of solar energy. In later Hindu theology, however, Vishnu is the Sustainer of the Universe in the divine Trinity, alongside Brahma the Creator and Shiva the Destroyer. An avatar (Sanskrit *avatara* from *ava* 'downwards' and *tri* 'to cross over') represents an incarnate form of God. The divine Higher Being takes on a mortal body out of compassion, in order to help suffering humanity to attain liberation and perfection.

The story of Krishna's birth, childhood and life contains many parallels with accounts of Jesus in the New Testament, even in the

details (as for instance in the occurrence early on of a massacre of infants). Krishna and Christ are the two most prominent performers of miracles in the holy scriptures of the Hindus and Christians respectively. Bhagvan Dass divides Krishna's miracles into seven types:[18]

1. the granting of visions;
2. visual perception over an extraordinary distance;
3. the multiplication of small quantities of food or items;
4. appearing simultaneously at many places in a less than fleshly body;
5. the healing of the sick by the laying-on of hands;
6. the raising of the 'dead' to life; and
7. the destruction of demons and the exorcism of the possessed.

Some miracle-workers can perform only one or two kinds of miracles, others more. There have always been mystics, holy men or seers of different powers and reputations. And India has always been the home of the miraculous, the land of the phenomenal. In his treatise *The Holy Science*, Sri Yukteswar[9] sees the purpose of earthly existence as the aspiration and attempt to unite the inmost self with God. For Yukteswar regards Creation as 'substantially nothing but a mere simulacrum of Nature imposed over the only Real Substance, God, the Eternal Father, who is Guru – the Supreme – in this universe'. This means that all things are composed of the same one Entity. And God himself, who appears as a multiplicity because his essence is expressed in a variety of ways, is everywhere and everyone. The Bible says exactly the same thing in Psalm 82:6, 'I have said, Ye are gods; and all of you are children of the most High.' The passage is quoted in John's Gospel: when the Jews accused him of trying to make himself out to be a God, Jesus replied, 'Is it not written in your law, I said, Ye are gods?' (John 10:34).

Yukteswar goes on to explain that initiates who have attained perfect mastery over the world of matter find their God or ultimate fulfilment in their inner self and not in the external world. These 'divine humans' finally obtain mastery over life and death, virtually able to shape the world around them, capable of absolutely anything. They achieve the eight ascetic attainments (Aishwaryas), through the power of which they can

anima: shrink matter (or one's body) down to whatever size they want;

mahima: enlarge it up to whatever size they want;
laghima: make it weigh as little as they want;
garima: make it weigh as much as they want;
prapti: possess anything and everything that they want;
vashitwa: gain power (*vasha*) over anything and everything they want;
prakamya: fulfil all desires through the strength of the will;
ishitwa: become the Lord (*Isha*) of all things.

When Jesus' disciples failed to exorcise an unclean spirit, they asked him why, and he explained that it was through lack of faith: 'For verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you' (Matthew 17:20). The related phenomena of teleportation and levitation have had an uninterrupted tradition both in and outside the Christian Church. No fewer than around 230 Catholic saints are recorded as having possessed the ability to levitate more or less voluntarily.

During the nineteenth century, the medium Daniel Douglas-Home successfully convinced thousands of spectators on various occasions of his ability to 'fly'. Witnesses included such notable celebrities as William Makepeace Thackeray, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Napoleon II, John Ruskin, Dante Gabriel Rossetti and Mark Twain. Such performances took place over a period of nearly forty years, and were repeatedly investigated and confirmed.

In his reports on all the different forms of psychic phenomena, Francis Hitching cites more than twenty-five case of levitation.[20] Examples of levitation have certainly been reported right up to the present day. Swami Rama gives an eyewitness account in his collection of talks, *Living with the Himalayan Masters*. The phenomenon has been photographed and even filmed.

Levitation seems to be produced by a greatly heightened control over bodily processes, for example by concentration and meditation, or through the effects of religious ecstasy that permit moments in which the force of gravity somehow no longer applies.

Such 'minor miracles' can even be performed for money or to satisfy sensation-seekers. But the true masters only perform these 'miracles' for altruistic purposes.

The miracle-working holy man of India Sai Baba says, like Jesus, that every person has divine powers that can be brought into play through training and mental discipline. But whoever uses the

powers to sow evil will reap evil. And whoever uses the powers selfishly and to his own advantage will lose them altogether. Sometimes these powers are limited in their efficacy or duration, particularly when used without altruism, wisdom and spiritual awareness.

Today, as thousands of years ago, 'miracles' remain a legitimate method of bringing the divine message closer to the doubters and those who are hemmed in by the material world. Almost everything reported about Jesus has a parallel in the ancient Indian legends. One of the reasons that this similarity between Indian and Christian stories remains so little known is the fact that very few Europeans are in a position to read the Sanskrit of the ancient texts: only recently have translations begun to arouse the interest of the Western world.

None of the known 'divine-human' representatives of God on Earth seems to have been able to convince the unbelieving masses of his divine authority without recourse to miraculous signs and wonders. Every Son of God has had to be able to demonstrate his status to sceptics by means of superhuman attributes.

Krishna is an avatar – a mortal form descended to Earth – of the god Vishnu (the second element in the Hindu Trinity, the Sustainer of Creation). It would seem that Krishna and Christ might well have more in common than miracles: it is certainly possible that the two expressions are etymologically cognate. The title 'Christ' (Latin *Christus*) comes from the Greek *khristos* (*christos*), the 'anointed' (Greek *khriein* 'to anoint', but also 'to dye', 'to colour'; *khrisma* 'ointment'). The Sanskrit name *Krsna* (pronounced 'Krishna') means 'the black' or 'the blue'. Both terms, Christus and Krishna, may well also be related to the Sanskrit root *krs* (pronounced 'krish') 'to attract', and based on this etymology the name Krishna is often translated as 'The all-attracting One'. This person who attracts all Creation is the highest form in which God has been seen on Earth.

Following Brahmin tradition, Brahma is viewed as the Creator of the Universe, and sometimes even called 'Father'. Vishnu, who became incarnate as Krishna, is occasionally called 'Son'. And Shiva, the third Person in the Hindu Trinity, who is Spirit, corresponds thus to the Holy Spirit, 'who directs the eternal law of formation and dissolution, indwelling in all living creatures and all Nature . . .'

Krishna is the eighth avatar or incarnate form of the god Vishnu, following seven earlier avatars. The ninth appearance of

Vishnu on Earth is in the form of Gautama Buddha (Prince Siddhartha, Sakyamuni 'the sage of the Sakyas').

Krishna and Christ

According to the most ancient of sources, some 5000 years ago the Lord Vishnu appeared in the form of a man in the presence of the maiden Devaki ('Made for God'), a member of the royal household. Devaki fell into an ecstasy and was 'overshadowed' by the spirit of God, who came to her in the splendour of his divine majesty, so that she conceived a child. The tradition tells of an annunciation:

> Blessed art thou, Devaki, among women. Welcome art thou amid the holy Rishis. Thou hast been chosen for the work of salvation . . . He will come with a luminous crown: heaven and earth will be full of joy . . . Virgin and Mother, we greet you; thou art the mother of us all, for thou shalt give birth to our Saviour. Thou shalt call him Krishna.

But the King of Mathura had been warned, in what to him was a nightmare, that a king would be born to his sister's daughter, who would be more powerful than he. The maiden Devaki hid in the fields with the newborn child in the company of some cowherds, and miraculously the child escaped the soldiers who had been despatched by the king to kill all newborn male babies.

According to another version of the tradition, King Kansa of Madurai saw a shooting star and asked a Brahman about its significance. The wise man replied that the world had become wicked, and that people's greed for gold together with their burdensome life had moved God to send a Redeemer. The star was the sign of Vishnu, who had been made flesh in the womb of Devaki; the avatar would one day restore righteousness and lead humanity on new paths. Beside himself with rage, the king had the Brahman killed along with all newborn males.

There are many tales of Krishna's childhood, glorying in his power and knowledge.

Like the boy Jesus in the apocryphal Gospels, Krishna was able to perform every conceivable miracle even as a little child. It was thus he was able to survive the many dangers prepared for him by his uncle Kansa. At one point a snake crawled into his cradle to strangle the child, but was itself killed by the lad with his bare

hands (an exact parallel with the myth concerning the young Herakles/Hercules). Later, Krishna fought the multiple-headed snake Kaliya, defeated it, and compelled it to leave the River Yamuna. The heroic deeds performed by the Indian superboy were enough to fill any number of volumes. When he was sixteen, Krishna left his mother to spread his new teaching throughout India. He spoke out against corruption among the people and the princes, everywhere supported the weak against oppression, and declared that he had come to Earth to release people from suffering and sin, to drive out the spirit of evil, and to restore the rule of righteousness. He overcame tremendous difficulties, fought alone against entire armies, performed a wide range of miracles, raised the dead to life, healed lepers, gave sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf, and made the lame walk.

Eventually he amassed a large number of disciples, who supported him zealously and were to continue his work. Everywhere people came to him to hear his teachings and to marvel at the miracles he performed. He was honoured as a god and acclaimed as the true Redeemer who had been prophesied by the fathers.

From time to time Krishna would go off by himself for a while, leaving his disciples to their own devices in order to test them, and returning when they got into difficulties. The growing movement was watched with suspicion by those in authority, and they tried to suppress it, but without success.

Krishna did not wish to propagate a new religion but simply to renew the religion that already existed and cleanse it of all its follies and abuses. His teachings are in the form of poetic parables, aphorisms and similes very like the recorded words of Jesus. They are contained in the *Bhagavad Gita*, which presents the lofty, pure morals of the sublime view of life in a way simple enough for all to grasp. Krishna thus teaches his followers to love their neighbours; he lauds respect for the individual, calling upon all of us to share what we have with the poor, to do good deeds out of pure altruism and righteousness, and to believe in the ever-dependable goodness of the Creator. He instructs us to repay evil with good, to love our enemies, and he forbids revenge. He consoles the weak, condemns tyranny, and helps the unfortunate. He himself lives in poverty and devotes himself to the poor and the downtrodden. He is devoid of personal ties, and advocates chastity.

Krishna also undergoes a Transfiguration. The Son of God shows himself in a thousand different divine forms simultaneously to his favourite disciple Arjuna, and tells him,

Who doeth all for Me; who findeth Me
In all; adoreth always; loveth all
Which I have made, and Me, for Love's sole end,
That man, Arjuna! unto Me doth wend.

(*Bhagavad Gita*, Canto 11, tr. by Sir Edwin Arnold)

Finally, Krishna allows an arrow to strike him in the foot, marking the end of his ordained life on Earth. But when his followers search for his body it is nowhere to be found, for he has ascended to heaven.

The legend of Krishna is probably the oldest source that contributes to the mystical Christ figure. But similarities with the legends of Dionysos/Bacchus (dating from around the eighth century BC) are equally astonishing. And in addition to the lofty cultures of ancient Greece and Rome, that of ancient Persia – which also had its Saviour-Redeemer personalities – equally decisively influenced the eschatological and apocalyptic notions of the Christian religion.

Chapter Seven

THE SHROUD – A LEGACY OF JESUS

Accusation and Trial

The political situation in Judea at the time of Jesus was extremely turbulent, and was regularly punctuated with dramatic events.

Herod the Great (37–4 BC) had had to deal with persistent civil unrest, sometimes outright revolt, throughout his reign. Fighting against him and his successors was a guerrilla army, nationalist fanatics to a man, determined to do everything they could to undermine Roman rule. Josephus makes a reference to the leader of the troublesome 'gang of bandits', one Judas of Galilee, but the 'bandits' would seem rather to have been men of strong religious convictions, who were basically just trying to defend the faith of their forefathers against foreign domination.[1]

Among these rebel groups – which included the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the Rechabites – the Essenes were given special place, being formally organized as an Order, and having an 'élite corps' in the form of the Nazarenes (Nazareans). The Sadducees and Pharisees were eventually to come to a compromise with Herod's successors, accepting the lure of high office. The Rechabites, on the other hand, utterly rejected the 'civilization' that Rome sought to impose on them, and continued to live in tents outside the towns, as their forebears had done for centuries.

It was probably when Herod's son Archelaus was deposed in the year AD 6 that the Essenes and Nazarenes returned from exile in and around the city of Alexandria. Certainly, the monastery of Qumran was reoccupied from that time.

But it was also at that point that nationalist resentment of imperial Roman domination flared up into guerrilla warfare, particularly in the area administered by Herod Antipas (Archelaus' brother).

The resistance struggle was mostly conducted in great secrecy by Essene partisans who could melt invisibly into the countryside. And so it was that the Essenes and the Nazarenes were actively and bravely taking on the full strength of the mighty Roman overlord even while the conformist Pharisees and the Sadducees were becoming integrated into the overlord's political system.

After the death of Herod the Great, the country lurched from one crisis to the next. Many of the native Jewish population were desperately hoping for a Messiah who would revive the Kingdom of David and Solomon, and free the land from the hated foreign dictator.

According to the Gospel texts of Mark, Matthew and Luke, the period during which Jesus was publicly active lasted for about one to two years at the most. Only the latest Gospel, John's, refers to three Passovers in Jerusalem at which Jesus was present. All in all, it has to be assumed therefore that Jesus stayed in the area for between two and three years.

During this time, Jesus often crossed the borders of the various provinces into which Palestine was divided, each time thereby leaving the jurisdiction of the local religious and secular authorities. Why he should then go to Jerusalem, and by so doing give himself up to his persecutors, remains a mystery.

And his entry into Jerusalem was particularly spectacular: Jesus was jubilantly feted as the king who would establish the 'Kingdom of God'.

By Christian tradition, the 'Kingdom of God' is a state of heavenly perfection, to be understood in a purely spiritual sense: all may attain to it through God's own grace and assistance. But what the masses in Jerusalem were looking for was something of a rather more worldly nature. Jewish Messianism anticipated a Kingdom of God that was a new, purified and powerful state of Israel, and its leader (the Messiah) was expected to be an invincible military commander and statesman, as King David once had been, and to free the land from the Roman yoke.

Jesus' view of such hopes is recorded in the Gospel of Luke: 'The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you' (Luke 17:20–21).

The entry into the city of Jerusalem was an act of unprecedented provocation. Up to that point, the resistance had operated as an underground movement: they had not dared to show themselves openly in the capital. About a week before the great festival of the

Passover, Jesus decided to leave his place of hiding in the mountains of Ephraim (John 11:54), and journeyed with his followers by way of a detour through Jericho to the capital, some 40 kilometres away (Luke 19:1,28).

Mark's Gospel tells of the dramatic decision:

> And they were on the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him,
>
> Saying, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles:
>
> And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.
>
> (Mark 10:32–34)

Five days before the great festival, they reached Jerusalem. Entering through the city gates, Jesus was noisily acclaimed by the crowds. But although Jesus was riding a donkey as a gesture of humility, meekness and peaceful intent, the acclamation was later to be tragically misunderstood. 'The whole city was in turmoil' (Matthew 21:10, *Jerusalem Bible* version). Jesus' strongly-worded statements, and the equally forthright, not to say violent, methods he used in driving the traders out of the Temple, might perhaps in a different atmosphere have been understood as being allegorical – but they were certainly open to being interpreted as a clarion call to the people to rise up. Some of Jesus' words were the very opposite of conciliatory: 'Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword' (Matthew 10:34).[2] And 'I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?' (Luke 12:49).

The very first thing Jesus did in Jerusalem was to mount an attack against the authorities, an attack such as no one had dared to attempt before. With unmistakable directness Jesus remonstrated against the guardians of the Law in the Temple. His pointed and barbed denunciations (Matthew 23) were a public settling of accounts with his antagonists in front of a great number of enthusiastic pilgrims. According to the Gospels, he even went so far as to drive the traders and moneychangers out of the place of worship. Of course, such an attack on the authority of the Temple officials could not be allowed to pass unchallenged – but care was required, for in such a tense situation any untoward action was liable to trig-

ger a mass uprising. 'And the scribes and chief priests heard it, and sought how they might destroy him: for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine' (Mark 11:18).

There was always the possibility of riots and other forms of civil unrest during the holy days of the festival, and Pilate (the Governor, as representative of the Emperor in Rome) had marched in from Caesarea with his cohorts (each of 500 legionaries) to be ready to intervene if necessary. Such disturbances are only briefly alluded to in the Gospels. According to Mark, a certain Barabbas was taken prisoner together with 'them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection' (Mark 15:7). Mark also says that the chief priests and scribes 'sought how they might take [Jesus] by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people' (Mark 14:1–2). If Jesus was to be liquidated, both great speed and great caution were called for.

The Pharisees first tried to get Jesus to incriminate himself in a public discussion. They asked him whether it was right to pay taxes to the Roman Emperor. If Jesus had replied in the negative, he would have been open to the charge of high treason; had he replied positively, he would have lost all the support and most of the interest of the people. Instead, he got out of the predicament by a stroke of genius (Mark 12:14–17). The Sadducees then attempted to ridicule his doctrine of reincarnation. This attack too he parried skilfully (Mark 12:19–27).

The date of the events in Jerusalem still poses a considerable problem. Neither the month nor the year of the event is to be found in the Gospels. Current speculations range from the year 30 to the year 33.

Although all the Gospels agree that Jesus was crucified on a Friday, there are two different suppositions about what date of the month it was. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples on the Thursday evening. By the Jewish calendar, Thursday was the 14th of Nisan, the day on which the Paschal Lamb was to be eaten. The Friday after, 15 Nisan, was the first holy day of the Jewish festival of Passah-Mazzoth. But it is quite unthinkable that Jesus was arrested and interrogated before the entire Sanhedrin (comprising seventy-one Jewish citizens) on that very holy night. Such a violation of Jewish Law by its own guardians is simply not credible.

An alternative solution is to be found in the gnostically influenced text of John's Gospel. Here, the Last Supper is not specified

as the Passover meal of the Jews, and Jesus has already been crucified by 14 Nisan. If this is the way it really was, Jesus must have celebrated without the prescribed unleavened loaves and ritual utensils, because these are (even now) only prepared for use on the day immediately preceding the Passover, which is actually called the Day of Preparation. John's version of events seems logical enough, but it relies on the assumption that on this occasion Jesus did not observe the Jewish customs anchored in the Law (although there were certainly other occasions on which he deliberately ignored them).

Even the place chosen for the Last Supper suggests the influence of the Essenes: 'Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in' (Luke 22:10). But in the Jerusalem of those days, the fetching and carrying of water was done only by women. So in this particular house the usual customs obviously did not apply. And in fact the meal did not proceed at all according to the prescribed rite, but entirely in the Essene manner. They did not eat the sacrificial lamb, but bread, like the Essenes, who of course did not eat meat at all. In the apocryphal *Gospel of the Ebionites*, when the disciples raise the question of where they should prepare the Passover meal, Jesus tells them, 'I do not want to eat meat with you this Passover!'[3] The disciples then have an argument about their places at the table because, according to the Rule of the Essene Order, each person was assigned a fixed place according to rank, designated by proximity to the Master (1QSa). 'And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest' (Luke 22:24). So a kind of Passover meal did take place, but not on the prescribed day, without meat, and without the usual ritual.

At this point, a question arises that has caused the experts considerable soul-searching – a question to which they have as yet been unable to come up with an answer: how to establish the date of the Last Supper. But the problem is solved automatically if it was the Essene calendar that was used to set the date for the festival. Because the solar calendar made it possible to divide the year (counted as 364 days) into 52 weeks, there was no remainder in days left over at the end of each year (as there was with the Jewish calendar). New Year's Day always fell on a Wednesday in spring. Accordingly, the Essene Passover on 14 Nisan regularly occurred on a Wednesday, and so must have taken place two days before the orthodox Jewish Passover that year. John's Gospel is thus also

correct in saying Jesus was crucified on 14 Nisan, for what he has in mind is the official calendar, which put the Crucifixion on the day before Passover.

The entire sequence of events in Jerusalem now takes place over a period of three days and can be established logically and conclusively:

Tuesday evening:	the Last Supper
	arrest at Gethsemane
	preliminary hearing by Annas
	threefold denial by Peter
Wednesday morning:	the beginning of the trial before the Sanhedrin
	examination of witnesses by Caiaphas
Wednesday night:	Jesus kept in custody overnight
	receives ill-treatment in Caiaphas' prison
Thursday:	the Sanhedrin reconvenes to announce judgement
	Jesus handed over to Pilate and interrogated
	Jesus is passed over to Herod Antipas
Friday:	the political trial continues before Pilate
	the scourging, the crowning with thorns
	the sentencing
	crucifixion at about the sixth hour (12 noon)

An unusual incident took place during the arrest of Jesus by the Temple guards after the meal: 'Then Simon Peter having a sword drew it, and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus. Then said Jesus unto Peter, Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?' (John 18:10–11). Why was Peter carrying a sword?

Since the second century BC, the Sanhedrin (Greek-derived Hebrew: 'Assembly') had represented the highest Jewish authority not only in matters of religion but in all secular, national and judicial affairs to which there was a religious aspect. Before rule by Rome, the Sanhedrin also wielded considerable political power. It was composed of seventy members – priests, elders and scribes – under its president, the current chief (or high) priest, at this time Joseph Caiaphas. Among the elders of the assembly was Joseph of Arimathea, a rich and influential land-owner who voted against the decision of the High Council to put the Nazarene to death (Luke 23:50–51).

After detailed cross-examination of the witnesses, the chief priest, Caiaphas, concluded by posing the crucial question: 'I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God' (Matthew 26:63). When Jesus answered, 'Thou hast said [it]', Caiaphas took this as a Yes – from which there was no turning back. According to Jewish Law, anyone who arrogated divine honours to himself was a blasphemer, and was liable to immediate capital punishment. Actually, the Jewish Law stipulated execution by stoning, but Jesus could not be taken out and summarily stoned to death because the Sanhedrin had only recently received an order from Rome that no one was to be put to death without the prior approval of the Roman procurator. Another factor was that all business before the Sanhedrin had to be concluded during the hours of daylight (between dawn and dusk). If all the seventy council members had been summoned and the trial had taken place at night, the entire proceedings would have been illegal from the start. In Luke's Gospel there is confirmation that the session took place during the day (Luke 22:66). The assembly did not reconvene until the following morning (Thursday) to announce its judgement: 'When the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took council against Jesus to put him to death: And when they had bound him, they led him away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor' (Matthew 27:1–2).

Pilate seems to have been unhappy with the case from the very beginning (John 18:31) because, as he said himself, he could find no count on which Jesus might be guilty. He tried to get him set free but, failing, in a demonstrative gesture washed his hands of the matter to preserve his 'innocence' (Matthew 27:24). Pilate's attempt then to pass the delicate matter on to the local Jewish ethnarch, Herod Antipas – who happened to be present for the festival – also failed, for Jesus would say nothing at all. He was sent back again to the procurator (Luke 23:6–16), who at last gave in to the will of the mob that had been stirred up by Caiaphas and the priests, and turned the Nazarene over to them for execution as they demanded.

To bear in mind that Jesus the Nazarene belonged to the New Covenant of the Essene movement, presumably as one who observed the Community Rule without actually belonging to the enclosed community, is to be able to find an explanation for quite a few of the contradictions and puzzles of the Gospel stories that is relatively straightforward and makes perfect sense. It certainly

explains how Jesus could be prosecuted by the Orthodox Jews and yet find himself on trial for his life in the secular and political courts at the same time. Indeed, considering the scant nature of the historical sources at our disposal, it is *solely* in this light that the events surrounding the end of Jesus' ministry in Palestine can be convincingly and satisfactorily accounted for.

Problems arising from the popular understanding of the 'Resurrection from the dead' and the 'bodily Ascension' of Christ are rather more difficult to solve. The available literary sources do not explain why Jesus was declared dead just a few hours after his crucifixion. His legs, after all – unlike those of the two men crucified with him – had not been broken. (Fracturing the legs would have decisively shortened the torment, which could otherwise last up to five days.) No wonder Pilate was very surprised when he was asked to release 'the body': 'And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead' (Mark 15:44).

No one saw the Resurrection – or, at least, we are told of no one purporting to have seen it – which means the Resurrection of Jesus from the dead has to remain purely a matter of faith. So the Church's teaching on the critical subject of the Resurrection must be regarded as an inference after the event, an interpretation.[4]

The matter might be left to rest there: either one believes in Jesus' Resurrection or one does not. Surely it would in any case be impossible now, so far ahead in time, to turn a critical spotlight on a historical event two thousand years ago and find out exactly what happened. It would indeed be quite impossible – were it not for an amazing piece of evidence that enables us to examine the events surrounding the Crucifixion in great detail, even while using the most modern tests technology can devise: Jesus' shroud.

The Turin Shroud

> And now when the even was come, because it was the [Day of] Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,
>
> Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable (a wealthy: Matthew, Luke) counsellor (who was a disciple of Jesus: Matthew, John) (although a secret one for fear of the Jews: John) (who had not agreed to their decision and action: Luke), which also waited for the kingdom of God, (Luke) came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus (Matthew, Luke, John).

> And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.
>
> And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph (Matthew, John).
>
> And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the (clean: Matthew) linen (Matthew, Luke) (linen wraps: John), and laid him in a (his: Matthew) (new: Matthew, John) sepulchre (in which no body had been laid before: Luke, John) which was hewn out of a rock (Luke), and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.
>
> (Mark 15:42–46)

The linen mentioned here is today preserved in Turin, constituting an authentic document that has virtually by a miracle captured one of the most important moments in the history of the world for posterity, and this in something approaching a three-dimensional representation.

The famous Shroud of Turin is 4.36 metres long and 1.10 metres wide, and shows with astonishing clarity the impression of a man that has recently been crucified. One half of the shroud shows the back and, because the shroud was wrapped around the man's head at about its middle, the other side shows the front. The head, the face, the thorax, arms, hands, legs and feet of the man are easy to recognize within the impression. The colour on the fabric is for the most part sepia in tone, although grey in some areas. Traces of blood are clearly visible, and appear as a very pale crimson.

On first looking at the Shroud as a whole, one's eyes are first led to two dark stripes running vertically down the length of the Shroud, which extend to two larger, rhomboidal spots. These are burn marks that have been repaired with lighter-coloured stitches. Their peculiar shape arose as a result of the shroud's almost being lost in a fire in the Chapel at Chambéry, in France, in 1532, when lying folded in 48 layers in a silver casket. In the heat of the blaze, the silver container began to melt on one side, until streaks of molten silver left the geometrical pattern of scorch-marks in the folded material (Plate 29).

If it is really Jesus' image on this piece of material, and the authenticity of the cloth can be proved, then this document not only represents a scientific sensation of the utmost importance, it can also serve as the only acceptable scientific basis on which the question that has occupied so many for so long may be settled once and for all: did the Resurrection of Jesus actually happen?

There may be initial reservations over whether any length of fabric could really survive a period of time amounting to almost

two millennia while suffering so little evident damage. Yet it is a fact that there are many pieces of linen that are considerably older and better preserved than the Shroud of Turin. Well-preserved exemplars are to be found in the collections of the Egyptian National Museum in Cairo, the Egyptian Museum of Turin, and the Egyptology departments of historical museums in London, Paris, Berlin, Hildesheim and elsewhere, some specimens going back 3500, even 5000, years. The dry climate of the Near East is particularly favourable to the long-term preservation of textiles and scrolls. In each case the vegetable substance is mainly cellulose, a very stable molecule.

The Greek word *sindon* (sometimes translated in English as 'muslin') in the Synoptic Gospels refers to a length of linen. The Shroud is of linen, the fibres twilled together in a ratio of 3:1, creating a fishbone weave. In Jesus' time this was an extremely rare form of loom work, requiring a great deal of expertise, and probably very expensive. The only surviving examples of this kind of material woven in the first century come from the Roman province of Syria, to which Palestine then belonged. (Twilling was introduced in western and northern Europe only in the fourteenth century AD.)

On using an electron microscope to examine the strands in 1973, Professor Raes of the University of Ghent in Belgium discovered a few traces of cotton, a plant that was not under cultivation in the Near East at the time of Jesus. In contemporary Syria and Mesopotamia, however, cotton imported from India was occasionally used for weaving, although the cotton had to be processed beforehand on a special loom.

The Swiss botanist and forensic scientist Dr Max Frei made use of complex techniques of pollen analysis to arrive at some sensational discoveries. Dr Frei took twelve samples, each ten to twenty square centimetres in area, from different parts of the Shroud's surface, on adhesive tape. Under the scanning electron microscope, he found, in addition to dust and the linen fibres, between one and four grains of plant pollen per square centimetre. Grains of pollen are between 0.0025 and 0.25 millimetres in size, and are therefore not generally visible to the naked eye. But the tiny grains are surrounded by a double skin, the chemical composition of which has not been fully determined even today. The external shell is by itself so durable that under certain conditions the pollen can survive intact for several millions of years. Moreover, every species and variety of plant has tiny pollen grains of an appearance quite dis-

tinctive from those of any other, so that it is possible to tell quite easily which grain originated from which plant.

In a report on his research published in March 1976, Frei announced that he had been able to identify a total of forty-nine different types of plant from the pollen he had found on the Shroud. Many of the plants still grow in all the areas in which the Shroud is said to have been kept during the course of its history: one such is the cedar of Lebanon (*Cedrus libani*). But the sensational news was that there was also pollen from eleven types of plants that do not grow at all in central Europe, but are halophytes deriving from the Near East. Halophytes are plants that flourish only in soils containing an unusually high proportion of salt – like the soils of the region surrounding the Dead Sea. Among them were special desert varieties of tamarisk (*Tamarix*), seablite (*Suaeda*) and artemisia (*Artemisia*) species.

The history of the Shroud had until this point been traced back only as far as the fourteenth century, and some researchers had therefore assumed that it was at that date that the Shroud had been produced, in France, since when it had always been kept within the borders of France or Italy. The pollen analysis now offered clear proof that the linen must have been in Palestine earlier than this. In addition, it turned out that the kinds of pollen identified on the Shroud were also to be found in relatively high concentrations in those layers of sediment in the Sea of Galilee which date back to the time of Jesus.

Grains of pollen from eight other varieties of plants were characteristic of the steppes of Asia Minor, particularly the area around Edessa (today Urfa in Turkey). Dr Frei could not have imagined how significant this fact was to prove to be.

The Portrait of Edessa

That it is now possible to trace the history of the Shroud all the way back to its origins[5] is in large measure due to the research of the English historian Ian Wilson.[6] From the great quantity of historical evidence at his disposal he was able to show that the Shroud corresponds to the so-called Edessa Portrait, of which there have been accounts from as early as the first century, and which has been known as the Mandylion since the sixth century. The story of the Holy Shroud has all the thrills of a good novel.

According to the apocryphal *Gospel of the Hebrews*, which was used by the Nazarenes, Jesus gave the shroud described in the Gospels to the 'servant of the priests' after the Resurrection.[7] It is logical to assume that the recipient of so marked a favour was not one of the mortal enemies of Jesus. The 'servant of the priests' was most probably given the priceless gift as a token of gratitude for some special service rendered. But no matter who took possession of the sheet after the Resurrection, it was most probably then preserved by followers of Jesus, the most likely candidates being Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus who had arranged for the body to be removed from the Cross and placed in the tomb.

But the cloth could not be allowed to remain in Palestine: the continual and vicious infighting with the forces of the hated Roman overlords presented too much of a threat. And so the followers of Jesus arranged to get the Shroud out of the country. Only the large, well-established Christian communities to the north could provide a secure haven for it, such towns as Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus and Edessa, which lay far from the areas in which Jesus had worked.

In about AD 325, the Church historian Eusebius (260–340), Bishop of Caesarea, reported that there had been an exchange of letters between Jesus and the King of Edessa, Abgar V, known as Ukkama ('The Black'), who ruled AD 15–50.[8] Eusebius says that he himself translated this correspondence, allegedly taken from the archives of the Edessan king, from ancient Syrian (Aramaic) into Greek. Known and accepted as genuine from very early times in the West,[9] albeit disseminated in a multitude of variants, this Legend of Abgar evidently represented a deep-rooted documentary constituent of early Christian faith, which in turn rather supports the presumption that it is based on actual events.

In those days Edessa was an important centre of commerce not far off the old Royal Road, which led from Ephesus in the west to Susa in the east, crossing the old empires of the Lydians, Medes and Persians, and linking Edessa directly with India and eastern Asia via the Silk Route. The most valuable commodity of trade in Edessa was silk from the Far East, and it was in this trade that members of the large Jewish communities of the town, most of whom were merchants, were very actively involved. Politically, Edessa was ruled by the Abgar dynasty from 132 BC to AD 216.

An organized Christian Church was established in Edessa only during the middle of the second century, under Abgar IX Ma'nu. According to historical sources, however, it is likely that there was

a fairly sizeable Christian community in Edessa long before this, and that Abgar V Ukkama, even before the correspondence, already had some knowledge of Jesus' message.

Eusebius describes how King Abgar Ukkama sent a messenger to Jerusalem to ask Jesus to come to Edessa and heal him of a chronic rash. Jesus was unable to make the trip himself, but sent a disciple by the name of Thaddeus (called Addai in the Syriac texts) – not the apostle of that name but one of the seventy disciples mentioned in Luke (Luke 10:1) – with a letter for Abgar. In it, Jesus tells the king that the disciple will cure him, and that the letter will afterwards continue to protect the town from harm.

Sometime around 1850 a number of early Syriac manuscripts were discovered in a monastery near Wadi el-Natrun (the Natron valley) in the desert of Lower Egypt. Among them was another version of the Abgar story now known as *Doctrina Addai*,[10] that tallies exactly with the version noted down by Evagrius Scholasticus (527–600) at the end of the sixth century. And the same version of the tradition is recorded in the famous festive sermon delivered in the year 945 to mark the occasion on which the Edessa Portrait was installed in the Pharos Chapel at the court of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII Porphyrogennetos.[11] According to all these sources, Jesus sent not only a letter to Abgar but also a miraculously-formed portrait of himself. The king is said to have been cured at once by the miraculous power of this picture. And immediately after this spectacular miracle, Thaddeus-Addai preached in Edessa, whereupon Abgar and most of the citizens of the town were converted to the Gospel faith. The *Doctrina Addai* gives the date of Thaddeus' sermon as the year 343 by the Edessan reckoning, which corresponds to the year AD 33 – the very year in which Jesus was crucified.

Because a burial shroud was in those times considered to be contaminated with the 'impurity' of death, King Abgar would have been deeply offended if Thaddeus had handed him what evidently was one. Probably for this reason, Thaddeus folded the cloth to look more like a portrait on linen, and had it framed in gold by his Edessan co-religionist Aggai – a man who, according to Syrian and Armenian sources, was the leader of the Christian community of the town. It was a task for which Aggai was well suited: a goldsmith by trade, he was used to fashioning costly chains and had been responsible for crafting the king's own diadem. In the *Acta Thaddaei* of the sixth century (an attempt to explain how the image had been imposed on the cloth, from a contemporary view-

point), the term *tetradiplon* is used to describe the Shroud, and is probably intended to mean 'folded in four double layers'.[12]

If the unwieldy, more-than-four-metre-long Shroud is folded in the middle, and then again, three times, what is left can certainly be described as four double layers. The resulting rectangle of cloth, now a much handier 110 centimetres by 54.5 centimetres, simply displays the head of Jesus, impressively framed, without giving any grounds for suspecting that it is not the true size of the *sindon*.

According to the text of the festive sermon delivered at Constantinople in 945 (referred to above), Abgar Ukkama set the portrait, in its gold frame, above the town gates of Edessa.

Abgar died in AD 50. He was succeeded for only seven years by his eldest son Ma'nu V, before his second son Ma'nu VI came to the Edessa throne. He, however, reverted to paganism, and brutally persecuted the burgeoning Christian community there. It was at this time that the portrait disappeared and no more was heard of it for five hundred years. The festive sermon of 945 reveals what actually happened. Aggai, who by this time had been Bishop of Edessa for twenty-three years (by the reckoning of the Chaldean patriarchs), spirited the sacred relic away to a place of safety, out of the grasp of the inimical king. He immured it within the town wall, in a recess above the west gate. In response, Ma'nu had Aggai cruelly executed, on 30 July 57 according to Mares Salomonis.

The first indication that the Shroud had once more come to light is found in a document written by the Church historian Evagrius in the year 593. He dates the event to some fifty years earlier, in May 544. The festive sermon of Constantinople similarly reports that the picture was rediscovered in Edessa in the sixth century, and that it was the same picture of Christ that a disciple had brought to Abgar. According to Wilson, the linen cloth was rediscovered when the buildings of Edessa were being repaired, by order of the Emperor Justinian I, after a catastrophic flood in the year 525 – specifically when the town gate was being dismantled. The picture was evidently identified at once as the original portrait brought to Abgar. In 544, Bishop Eulalios wrote that the image discovered was an impression genuinely 'not made by human hands': in Greek, *acheiropoieton*.[13] The rediscovered picture was brought to 'the great church' (the cathedral of Hagia Sophia), where it was kept in a locked silver casket. From this time forward the cloth became known as the Mandylion, and was considered so sacred and precious that it was brought out for public veneration only on the most important feast days.

In 639 the Arabs captured Edessa and so acquired the Shroud. A wealthy Christian, Athanasius of the Gmea family, bought back the linen cloth from the Arabs and concealed it in a crypt in one of the many churches in the town.

The term Mandylion, used in relation to the picture from this period, is thought by most authorities to be derived from the Arabic *mandil* (a word itself derived from late Latin *mantelium*), meaning 'a length of cloth' such as might be used as to make a veil, a short cloak, a turban or a hankerchief. Personally, I would suggest instead that the title is somehow connected with the Sanskrit term *mandala*, which signifies 'a circle', and specifically a mystical diagram in circular form. Mandalas were much used in Tibetan Buddhism. They represent a religious experience in symbolic form, indicating particular spiritual relationships in the symmetry of their design, and assist in the meditative disciplines that lead to Enlightenment.

After the discovery of the Edessa Portrait in the sixth century, there was a great upsurge in image worship in Christianity. Many reports of other images of Christ 'not made by human hands' did the rounds at the time (such as the *acheiropoieta* of Memphis and Camuliana). And along with this development, a sudden and marked change in what Christ was believed to have looked like became evident. Up until the rediscovery of the Shroud image, Jesus had been portrayed on classical lines, as a philosopher or emperor, as a teacher of truth, a good shepherd or a beardless, boyish youth like Apollo – youth being a symbol of the divine. As veneration for the Mandylion became established, there suddenly appeared a form of portrayal that was strikingly similar to the three-dimensional face-on picture on the cloth. A good example of this is to be seen on the sixth-century picture of Jesus on the silver vase of Emesa. From then on Jesus was mostly shown in frontal view, with large, wide-open eyes under pronounced brows, long wavy hair parted in the middle, divided beard, long aquiline nose, and of mature age.

The image quickly became accepted with almost doctrinal unanimity throughout the whole Christian world. At the Synod of Constantinople in 691–2 it was decreed that from then on Jesus was only to be represented in his 'human form', only 'pictures true to life' were permissible. At about the same date, Justinian II (ruled 685–95 and 705–11) minted his coins with the portrait of Christ for the first time, and on these too the visage of Jesus was similar to the 'Shroud' image. The result is that although the literary tradi-

At least fifteen different and unmistakable features can be identified on the face on the Shroud that are also to be found on the portraits of Jesus painted by Byzantine artists.

tion has bequeathed us no information whatsoever on what Jesus looked like, he has been portrayed so consistently from the sixth century onwards that anyone who sees a portrait never has any doubt about who the subject is![14] Historians have listed totals of between fifteen (Wilson) and twenty (Vignon, Wuenschel)[15] conspicuous features in the Shroud portrait that can be recognized in images of Jesus from the sixth century onwards.

Until the tenth century – when the Mandylion was moved to Constantinople – this image of Christ's face was typical in Byzantine sacred art, along with other elements of the Shroud picture. Many portrayals of the time present a face-on view of Jesus, without the neck, within a rectangle that is longer horizontally than vertically, and that appears to have a grid pattern superimposed on it like a net of diagonal lines, the face itself framed by a circular opening. The general layout of these depictions corresponds precisely with that of the cloth 'folded in four double layers'. And besides, a portrait within a horizontally-based rectangle may be considered to offend normal aesthetic sensibilities, and is accordingly most unusual in all forms of visual representation.

Wilson suggests that the Edessa Portrait, the Mandylion, is the authentic 'original' which set the course for the history of art.

In the eighth century, the movement known as the Iconoclasts (the 'image-breakers') came to power in the Eastern Roman Empire under Emperor Leo III. Everywhere, religious images and icons were torn down and destroyed – but the Mandylion, already hidden away from the equally image-hating Muslims then ruling Edessa, survived this period unharmed. Sixty years later, when the Iconoclasts had officially been discredited, efforts began in Constantinople (continuing over the following decades) to have the precious image brought to the capital of the empire. The project finally met with success under Emperor Romanus I Lecapenus (ruled 920–944) who, in 942, sent his most able man, the general Curcuas, to collect the Christ portrait. It was not long before the imperial Byzantine army laid siege to the town of Edessa and demanded the surrender of the Mandylion in exchange for the release of 200 prisoners and the sparing of the town. To avoid bloodshed, the Edessans yielded to the Emperor's terms, thereby gaining both immunity for their town and twelve thousand pieces of silver. Even then, according to contemporary sources, the Edessans seem to have tried to fob the Emperor's men off with a replica twice before they relinquished the real Shroud.

On 15 August 944 the Shroud finally arrived in Constantinople,

greeted by jubilant crowds. And there it was probably kept for the next two and a half centuries, in the Blachernai church. (The pictures and 'shrouds' produced for the Pharos Chapel must be assumed to be copies.) Either during the surrender of the Mandylion at Edessa or while it was in transit to Constantinople, the picture had apparently come loose from its frame and been revealed as the complete Shroud. At any rate, Gregory – archdeacon of the Great Church of Constantinople – gave a sermon at the triumphal reception of the cloth, in which he mentioned the '. . . drops of blood, which had flowed out from his side . . .', that had left their impression on the cloth. And in this statement, at least, lies proof that the Mandylion of Edessa and the Turin Shroud are the same cloth. If the stab wound from the centurion's spear was visible, the cloth was no mere towel containing the image only of a face. The cloth must have originated in the brief period immediately following the Crucifixion.

The text of a sermon first given by Pope Stephen III in 769 had a passage inserted into it during the twelfth century to the effect that Jesus had lain stretched out with 'his whole body' on a white cloth '. . . on which the glorious countenance of our Lord and the full length of his body were thus miraculously impressed . . .'.[16]

Similar references are to be found in the ecclesiastical history of Ordericus Vitalis (around 1141)[17] and in the *Otia Imperialia* of Gervase of Tilbury at the beginning of the thirteenth century.[18] Over all these years the Shroud was evidently displayed in its full length on a regular basis in Constantinople. In 1203, the French crusader Robert de Clari wrote that he had seen the cloth in the Church of St Mary the Madonna at Blachernai in Constantinople: '. . . the Sindon, in which our Lord had been wrapped, which was displayed every Friday so that the figure of Our Lord could be clearly seen'.[19]

The Mysterious Templars

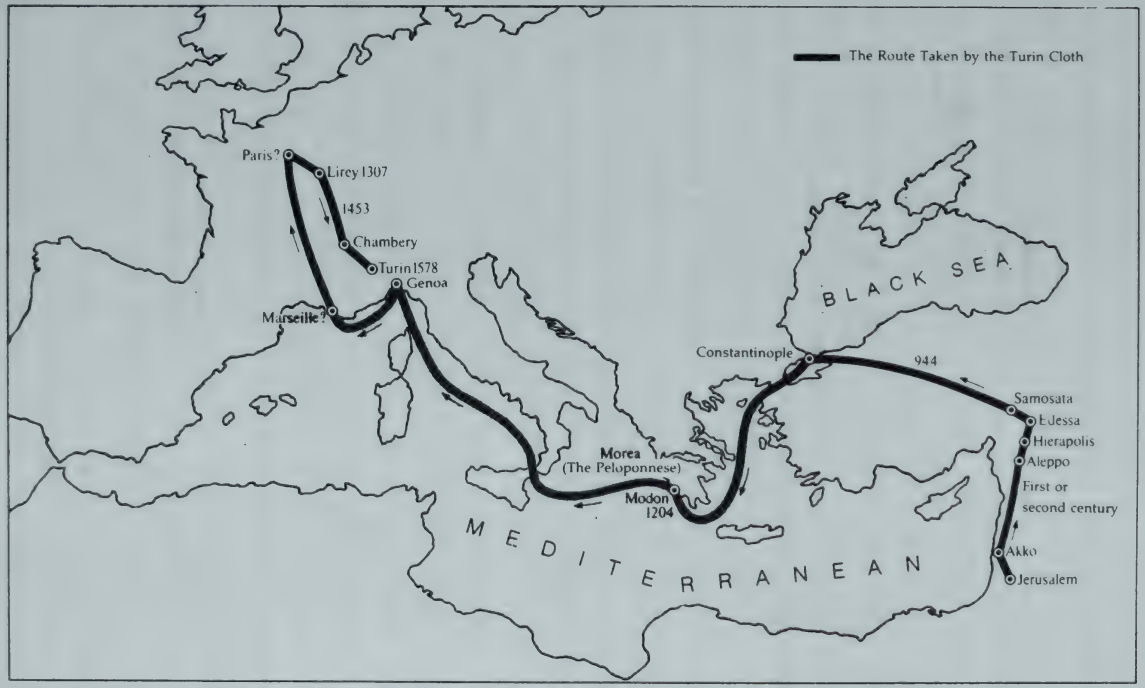
Robert de Clari had come to Constantinople as a knight on the Fourth Crusade. After a long siege, the crusaders finally sacked the wealthy city in April 1204. They destroyed everything that was of no value to them; everything in the city that was precious and costly they looted and took away with them, including, without compunction, the treasures and holy relics belonging to the

Christian Church. Amidst such chaotic turmoil the Shroud disappeared, not to emerge again until 150 years later in France, in the possession of members of the de Charny family, who displayed it in the West for the first time.[20]

A number of theories, some of them pretty far-fetched, have been put forward to explain how the cloth came to disappear from Constantinople, and how it ended up in France. Because the cloth disappeared for more than a century at a stretch, it was most probably in the possession of the same owners throughout the period – presumably a group closely linked with the crusaders, who were rich enough not to have to raise revenue by selling the relic, who could guarantee its security in absolute secrecy, who had a motive for keeping it, and who were also connected in some way with the de Charny family. All these clues point towards the mysterious Order of the Templars.

The Order of the Poor Knights of Christ and of the Temple of Solomon, better known simply as the Templars, was founded in 1119 by a group of crusaders led by the French knight Hugues de Payns. In addition to the standard vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, Templars swore to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land and actively to help in the struggle against the Muslims. The Order soon became extraordinarily powerful and influential. In the late thirteenth century, however, rumours began to circulate that the Templar knights were given to worshipping a mysterious icon at secret meetings. Contemporary accounts and the records of the Court of the Inquisition state that the Templars' icon was an image 'on a board' depicting a 'very pale and colourless' version of a life-sized male head 'with a divided beard, such as the Templars wear'. The Templars revered the icon as the 'unveiled face of God'. Copies of the icon were kept in some of the Templar centres. (A copy of this type was found in 1951 in a former seat of the Order at Templecombe in Somerset, England.) The icon matches the Mandylion image in every detail! The Templars had quite obviously come into possession of the Shroud and had made its image the focus of their religious worship. But how had they managed to remove the Shroud from Constantinople unnoticed and bring it to the West? Elmar R. Gruber has found a solution to this historical puzzle.

The Templars did not take part in the conquest of Constantinople because it had nothing to do with their duties in the Holy Land, but immediately after the city had been taken some of their agents went there on a secret mission. Only the grounds of



The Route Taken by the Turin Cloth

the Bucoleon and Blachernai palaces had not succumbed to the looting of the crusader soldiery, and then only because the crusader leaders had chosen the palaces for their own residence once the attack had succeeded. The treasures and relics the palaces contained were therefore distributed to high-ranking secular and religious dignitaries. In May 1204, Count Baldwin IX of Flanders was crowned Holy Roman Emperor in Byzantium. To relay this news to Pope Innocent II, the new Emperor chose the Master of the Templar court in Lombardy, one Brother Baroche, who may well have convinced Baldwin that to remove the Shroud from the Blachernai church and donate it to the Pope would undoubtedly secure the Vatican's favour. The mission was kept secret, however, for fear of possible unrest among the Greek population.

Brother Baroche transported his charge on a ship laden with riches on a course for Rome. Off the coast of the Peloponnese the vessel was suprised by six Genoese galleys, and was looted.[21] Strangely enough, the Genoese pirates then let the ship and its crew proceed on its way unscathed – captured ships were usually sailed back to Genoa – so that Brother Baroche reached Rome unharmed in autumn 1204, and delivered Baldwin's letter to Pope Innocent. Perhaps the Templars had made a secret deal with the Genoese by which the ship was robbed of its treasures but no harm came to the crew, the ship, or the 'worthless' old cloth. Or perhaps Baroche had in any case removed the cloth from the ship at some port of call – the Templars owned an estate on the Peloponnese – and then allowed himself and his vessel to be taken by the Genoese. At any rate, the Shroud had disappeared, and in a letter of 12 November 1204 Pope Innocent threatened the Genoese with excommunication unless they returned the stolen relics at once.[22]

The whole affair was extremely embarrassing for both Emperor and Pope, and it was hushed up. The Shroud had 'mysteriously disappeared'.

In 1307, Philippe le Beau of France used the rumours concerning the heretical icon-worship of the Templars, along with with other charges – such as homosexual practices, and secret deals with the Muslims and with the Cathars (who had been wiped out a hundred years earlier) – as a pretext to smash the Templars, and to embezzle the Order's extensive assets.

Two of the last remaining leaders of the Templar Order were burned at the stake in Paris for heresy in March 1314, even though they professed the Christian faith to the end, and protested their innocence. One was the Grand Master of the Order, Jacques de

Molay; the other was the Master of Normandy, Geoffroy de Charnay. Despite an intensive search, the prosecutors were unable to find the 'icon' of the knights anywhere.

A few years later, however, the cloth turned up again, and in the possession of a Geoffroy de Charny,[23] no less, who, from genealogical research, could well have been a grandnephew of the Templar knight who had forfeited his life, although having no overt connection with the Order himself. It would appear that the Templar leaders had hidden the cloth with a relative of Geoffroy de Charnay (the Templar) who was free of suspicion, in order to protect it from the persecution of Philippe. This would also explain why the de Charny family was unable to give any account of how they came to possess the cloth when they were later accused by the two bishops of Troyes, Henri de Poitiers and Pierre d'Arcis, of having displayed a forgery, following a public exhibition in the collegiate church at Lirey. Although the bishops had never seen the cloth themselves, they consistently opposed any public exhibition of the relic. A series of plots were then laid against the de Charny family, to which Margareta de Charny was able to put an end only by sending the cloth out of the country. She bequeathed it to the pious Duke Louis of Savoy, and in return received a rich reward for her 'valuable services'. The Duke gave the canons of Lirey 50 gold francs by way of recompense.

The history of the Shroud is well documented from here on,[24] and can be quickly summarized. In 1502 the cloth was deposited in the chapel of Chambéry Castle where, in 1532, it nearly succumbed to the fire that left the burn marks visible today. In 1578 the cloth was finally brought to Turin, where it was kept as a family heirloom of the House of Savoy for four centuries, until Umberto II of Savoy, ex-king of Italy, made it over to the Holy See in his will on 18 March 1983, shortly before he died. (Only two weeks earlier, Pope John Paul II had travelled in person to the Lisbon residence of the exiled monarch to persuade the old man to bequeath the cloth to the Holy See.)

Scientific Analysis of the Shroud

On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the state of Italy in 1898, the Shroud was once again exhibited to the public. The amateur photographer Secondo Pia then had the opportunity to photo-

graph the Shroud for the first time in its history. After several attempts, Pia succeeded in taking a reasonable picture of the Shroud. As he developed the exposed glass plates in his dark room, he made a sensational discovery: the negative on the photographic plate showed a natural likeness of Jesus, pretty well as he must have appeared in real life. The face familiar to us as the portrait of Jesus on the Turin Shroud is produced by the reversal of light and shade. (The bloodstains, on the other hand, appear as bright marks on the negative.) This fact alone demonstrates that the image cannot have been painted by an artist. To create such a perfect inversion by hand would take more than even the most modern technique is capable of. The negative of the photograph taken by Pia was the starting-point for the modern debate on the authenticity of the linen.

More recent photographs taken by Giuseppe Enrie in 1931 confirm that there is nothing to suggest that the image was painted on the shroud: no paint, no brush-strokes, no outlining. The body's impression gradually merges into the cloth: there are no distinct contours to be seen. These more precise photographs led to a whole list of new discoveries:

1. The body shown in the illustration is unclothed, just as criminals were when punished and executed under Roman law. An artistic representation of Jesus completely naked would have been inconceivable, a blasphemy of irredeemable proportions.

2. The image is very obviously of someone who was crucified by being nailed to a cross, rather than by being attached to the cross with thongs (as was also standard practice). Because crucifixions were frequent, this does not in itself serve to prove that the body is that of Jesus. It was the first Christian Roman Emperor, Constantine, who abolished this barbaric method of execution, so the cloth must have originated prior to AD 330.

3. The beard and hairstyle of the person portrayed were not usual in the Roman empire except in Palestine. The length of the hair and the central parting suggest that the victim was a member of the Nazarene community.

4. The Shroud bears clear evidence of six of the Stations of the Cross described in the Gospels. Firstly, medical specialists confirm the presence of a severe contusion under one eye and other superficial wounds apparently caused by punches to the face administered by the soldiers.

5. Secondly, small dumbbell-shaped marks are clearly visible all over the back of the body, and in some places on the front. There are more than ninety such wounds in all, from which it is possible to tell not only how many lashes were delivered during the scourging, but also that the Roman *flagrum* was the implement used. This special kind of whip had three leather straps fitted at the ends with pairs of small balls made of lead or bone.

6. The evidence for the third Station of the Cross is that the lash wounds in the shoulder region were evidently aggravated by the later application of a heavy weight – an indication that the victim of the crucifixion did indeed have to carry (at least) the horizontal beam of a cross.

7. The fourth Station of the Cross is visible in the irregular spots and streaks of blood on the forehead and the back of the head: evidence of a crown of thorns It was not, however, a plaited coronet or tiara, as depicted in Christian iconography by almost all artists, but must have been a 'cap' that covered the whole of the top of the head, much like Oriental crowns. Any counterfeiter would simply have produced a copy of the conventional circlet of thorns.

8. The fifth Station, the nailing to the cross, is visible in the streaks of blood on the hands and feet. From the direction of the larger trails of blood, it is not difficult to work out that the arms were outstretched at an angle somewhere between 55 and 65 degrees. Although artists and iconographers had always assumed that the nails were hammered through the palms, the bloodstains on the cloth show that the nails actually went through the wrists. Experiments by the French pathologist Barbet proved that the palms could not support a body weight of more than 40 kilograms (88 pounds) without tearing. What forger would have known that?

9. The last of the six Stations of the Cross is represented by a wound some 4.5 centimetres long on the right side of the body between the fifth and sixth ribs. The wound seems to have produced a fair amount of blood, which fits in with the account in John's Gospel of a spear injury from which 'blood and water' immediately flowed out.

10. Neither thigh nor calf show any signs of a major injury, which suggests that the legs were indeed not broken.

The points enumerated above, all of which coincide with the Gospel narrative, indicate that this was not just any crucifixion vic-

tim. The Jesuit and historian Herbert Thurston, who was convinced that the Shroud was a forgery, wrote, '. . . If this is not an impression of Christ, it was painted to look like one. These features, taken together, have never been exhibited by anyone else since the beginning of the world.'[25]

An even more thorough examination, using the most up-to-date scientific instruments, was possible only after a Commission had been set up for the scientific investigation of the Shroud. In 1969, Cardinal Pellegrino of Turin appointed a number of scientific specialists who, together with a panel of doctrinal experts, were to carry out a systematic examination of the Shroud. The group initially comprised only eleven specialists, but in the course of the following years so remarkable were the finds that entire institutes and universities, and even National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States, became involved in the analysis of the linen.

Until then, research had centred on the photographs of the Shroud, but in 1969 the Shroud could at last be examined directly, over a period of two days. It seems extraordinary, but the Commission and its task were kept strictly secret; the names of the members were not made public until 1976. The results of these first experiments were very meagre. A number of colour photographs were produced, and parts of the Shroud were examined under the microscope, in normal, ultraviolet and infra-red light. A final report recommended that future research should snip off a number of small samples on which a full range of scientific tests might then be performed.

The ex-king of Italy, Umberto II of Savoy, who at that time was still the legal owner of the Shroud, agreed to the requests of the experts. In 1973, he permitted it to be systematically examined and tested for three days, after which it was shown on television to an audience of millions while Pope Paul VI talked about it.

Was Jesus Entombed Alive?

Since the 1950s, a German called Hans Naber (but also using the names Kurt Berna and John Reban), specializing in writing about the Shroud, had been gaining some celebrity by producing publications in a somewhat sensational style. He declared that the Shroud proved beyond doubt that Jesus could not really have been

dead when he was removed from the Cross, because a corpse would not have continued to bleed in the manner that the body under the linen of the Turin Shroud evidently had.[26] Naber said he had had a vision in 1947 in which Jesus appeared and asked him to testify to the world that the man who had undergone Crucifixion had only appeared to be dead, but was in fact in a kind of trance from which he awoke after three days. Publication of the research results and photographs of the Shroud finally gave Naber the opportunity to try to prove his theories, and he managed to find a number of accredited Shroud experts prepared to support his attempt. Needless to say, the doctrinal authorities of the Church had no sympathy at all with his argument – but there came a day when, amid spectacular press coverage, Naber revealed that he had received a letter from an anonymous member of the Roman Catholic clergy, saying that it was not possible on the one hand to teach that Jesus had died on the Cross for the salvation of mankind, and on the other hand to revere a shroud which had never held a corpse. The Vatican found itself obliged to make an official statement on the affair, and determined at the same time that a radical and final solution had to be found.

To Professor of Theology Werner Bulst, Naber's claims were 'pure fantasy': Naber was accused of not knowing what he was talking about, and of having no 'scientific background' to boot.[27] But Naber could not just be ignored, because he was able to arouse worldwide interest. Nonetheless, the antagonism that Naber aroused by being persistent finally led to his physical, mental and financial ruin.

In 1973, when the latest results of the research came out, it looked as if the widespread doubts brought to prominence by Naber had been exploded. It is fairly simple, after all, to determine the presence of even minute quantities of blood by means of chemical analysis in a laboratory. The most common method by which this is done is what is called the peroxide reaction: even the merest trace of the red blood pigment haemoglobin releases oxygen from hydrogen peroxide, which in turn causes the colourless basic reagent benzidine to oxidize, so turning the solution blue. Haemoglobin and the product of its decomposition, haem, are very stable molecules that may continue to react normally even after many centuries.

Several threads from various bloodstained areas were carefully plucked from the material and examined by two independent laboratories in Italy. The result seemed to be a major setback – all the

results of the tests proved negative. It seemed as though the spots that looked like blood were not blood at all!

The bloodstains on the feet (had it actually been blood) were of course enough to confirm Naber's theory that blood had flowed after Jesus was removed from the Cross. But now it was much easier for everyone involved to claim that the Shroud was the work of an ingenious forger, and there was no need to have to admit that Jesus was still alive when he was removed from the Cross.

Publication of the Commission's report in 1976 caused the news of the 'forgery' to spread like wildfire. What was not published, however, was the fact that there was no known substance that could have been used for any such forgery, and that haem, although relatively stable, loses its stability, decomposes, and so becomes untraceable if exposed to high temperatures – as the Shroud had been in the fire of 1532.

Whether the blood was real or not was a question not satisfactorily answered until several years after the investigations of 1973. In 1978, the Shroud had been in Turin for exactly four hundred years, and to celebrate the occasion it was once again exhibited to the public. From 28 August to 8 October, more than three million pilgrims gazed at the most valuable relic in Christendom, probably the authentic image of Jesus. Then, before the evening of the last day of exhibition was ended, the linen was removed from its bulletproof display frame and laid out on an adjustable bench. In a room in the Palazzo Reale, which adjoins the cathedral, two teams of top scientists were waiting to begin a research programme that was to last for two weeks. One group was predominantly European, and included Turin's microscopy specialist Giovanni Riggi, the pathologist Baima Bollone of Milan, the physicist Luigi Gonella of Turin, and the forensic scientist Max Frei of Zurich. The other group consisted of twenty-five American specialists in the fields of photography, spectroscopy, radiography, computer technology, organic chemistry and physics, equipped with an extraordinary array of sophisticated instruments, some of which had been specially constructed for the planned analysis of the Shroud.

In the days that followed, using a time-consuming but rigorous working procedure, a great number of photographic negatives, special types of photographs, graphs and tables of data were prepared, which were then evaluated with the help of large computers in the United States. The Shroud was first divided into a grid of sixty individual sections in order to carry out a precise photometric survey. Each of these sections was then carefully photographed,

using a whole range of different filters. The negatives then served as the basis for a number of optical experiments. In NASA's photographic laboratory, the tonal (light-dark) values of the photographs were digitized (converted into computer data), which made it possible to enhance small areas of contrast in the picture, revealing fine details otherwise invisible to the human eye. The method even made it possible to reconstruct a life-size, three-dimensional relief of the body in the picture. If it had been a forgery, the proportions would have come out all wrong. On the basis of the relief it was possible to determine the actual height and weight of the body: about 1.80 metres tall and 79 kilograms in weight.

It was also possible to calculate the distance between the body and the cloth at every point, using the tonal values. The impression was darker at the places of direct contact between body and Shroud, and the greater the distance between the Shroud and the body the lighter the tone on the Shroud. The researchers then found that there was a direct relation between the image on the Shroud and the distances between the Shroud and the body: this confirmed the long-held assumption that the image must somehow have been formed by contact with the body. And investigations of the fibres under the electron microscope revealed that the image was not produced by any detectable particles of substance, but that the fibres of the Shroud where the image was visible are themselves darkened on their surface, unlike those in non-image areas.

One experiment that was performed directly on the cloth itself, X-ray fluorescence spectroanalysis, finally provided proof that the the bloodstains do actually derive from the presence of blood. In this test a part of the linen was subject to a high dosage of radiation for a short period, and thus induced to fluoresce. Because every molecule fluoresces in its own unique way under the influence of high radiation levels, the atomic structure of a material can be determined from its fluorescence spectrum. The marks showed significantly large amounts of the element iron, which is a major constituent in blood, and specifically in haemoglobin.

For the American chemist Dr Walter McCrone, the presence of iron was proof in itself that the Turin Shroud could not be genuine, as he declared very publicly at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science at the end of 1971, and repeatedly thereafter. He regarded the iron in the marks as a sure indication that paint containing iron oxide had been used – a type of paint that had not been invented until the fourteenth century.

Dr McCrone had never even seen the Shroud at first hand!

The paint hypothesis was refuted by a different experiment in which particles of the Shroud were treated with hydrazine and vaporized formic acid, and then subjected to ultraviolet light. Under such conditions, porphyrin molecules turn a bright red, and the technique showed they were present on the Shroud. Porphyrin is a precursor in the metabolism of haem, and is an established indicator of the presence of blood in cases where the haem itself has been destroyed by high temperature.

This method of ultraviolet fluorescence photography also proved that there were two different types of burned areas. In 1532, the Shroud smouldered in its casket in the palace chapel of Chambéry, confined in an atmosphere containing little oxygen. The reddish fluorescence of the singe-marks confirmed the smouldering fire in the silver casket, as known in its history. Other burn marks show a fluorescence of a different colour, suggesting an unknown second episode of burning, in an 'open' fire. (This evidence also refutes the hypothesis that the body in the Shroud somehow left its image on the cloth by some process of irradiation.)

The experiments of the US researchers show that the differing degrees of sepia coloration in the image is due to a change in the chemical structure of the cellulose of the linen. In laboratory experiments it was possible to simulate the same differences in colouring by using various oxidizing agents to decompose the cellulose of the linen. Oxidation images grow more distinct as they age.

As early as in 1924, the French biologist Professor Paul Vignon had achieved great success with his experiments in what was then termed 'vaporographic theory'. Vignon proved that a sweating body placed on a linen that has been soaked in a mixture of light oil and tincture of aloes (*Aloe medicinalis*) produces the same coloration as that on the Shroud, because the sweat decomposes to form ammonia vapours, which then cause an oxidation process in the cellulose to take place. This coloration is strongest at the point of contact between the linen and the body, and becomes weaker as the distance between the body and the linen increases. (This also explains why the impression resembles a photographic negative.) Vignon explained that the impression on the linen is principally caused by the ammonia vapours released during the evaporation of uric acid from a feverish body. The solution of aloes and myrrh adsorbed in the linen reacts with this, and ammonium carbonate is formed, the vapours of which colour the linen fibres. And in the

damp atmosphere between the skin and the linen, the degree of coloration is in direct proportion to the proximity of body and linen.

The rather more prominent coloration of the bloodstains is the result of a stronger chemical reaction. John's Gospel describes how large quantities of aloes were used in the burial of Jesus 'He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury' (John 19:38–40).

Vignon's experiments, though convincing, became the target of severe criticism in 1933, for the simple reason that the body salts and body heat necessary for the chemical reactions and evaporation could not have been present in sufficient amounts in a corpse. Nonetheless, it had been established that mixtures of aloes and myrrh in humid conditions could indeed create permanent impressions of a body on a fabric. Vignon showed that even the very brief exposure time of forty-five seconds could leave a faint impression, forming a clearly recognizable positive image when seen on a photographic negative.

Proof that the impression on the Shroud was of vaporographic origin could have put an end to virtually every other speculation – but the Christian Church objected to this neat solution on three counts:

a) According to the strict regulations involved in an orthodox Jewish burial, the corpse would have had to be physically and ritually cleansed before being embalmed. Marks such as bloodstains would have been impossible.

b) If the body had been properly wrapped up in the Shroud as prescribed, an overall impression that was somewhat misshapen and distorted across its width would have been produced, quite unlike the impression on the flatter lower surface, completely altering the image. This argument can be safely dismissed, because the soaked linen becomes rather stiff, so the material would not fold around every contour of the body, but only touch it on the more prominent parts.

c) Corpses do not sweat and do not emit body heat.

Professor Vignon's theory, the result of forty-six years of research,

was discarded on the strength of this last objection – because corpses do not sweat. But had Jesus still been alive, the high body temperature caused by his wounds would have made him sweat more profusely than ever!

The Radiocarbon Dating of 1988

Today there is a simple test to determine the age of all organic material, by measuring the levels of the radioisotope carbon-14 (chemically the same element as common carbon, C^{12}, but with two extra neutrons in the nucleus, which makes the atom so unstable that after a while it decays radioactively). Living organisms absorb carbon dioxide from the air, incorporating the carbon in their structure. When the life of the organism comes to an end, the radioactive carbon continues to decay at a very slow and constant rate (at the rate of about half of all the material every 6000 years, its 'half-life'). Because the proportion of C^{14} in the atmosphere is constant (replenished by radiation from space), all that has to be done is to measure the ratio of C^{14} to C^{12} in what is left of the old organic material, do a simple calculation in relation to the half-life, and the age of the archaeological find can be determined with a precision of close on 10 per cent.

Before the 1980s, however, a large sample of the material under examination was required – and in the process completely destroyed by fire – and no Church authority was going to allow Christianity's most important holy relic to be mutilated or even visibly damaged in such a way. But for some years now it has been possible to date even the tiniest quantities of a material, and in April 1988, once Umberto II of Savoy had been persuaded by the Pope to bequeath the cloth to the Holy See, the Vatican (forced into action by Naber's spectacular publications) ordered a radiocarbon examination of the Turin Shroud in the hope that it would show once and for all whether the relic was genuine or not.

Three laboratories specializing in the dating of archaeological material – in Zurich, Oxford and Tucson (Arizona) – were given postage-stamp-sized samples of the Turin cloth. Six months later, in October 1988, the sensational result was announced to the public: the examination had shown beyond doubt that the cloth originated in the Middle Ages (somewhere around 1260 to 1390).

This finding, which contradicted all previous research results, at

once aroused my suspicions about how carefully the radiocarbon dating had been carried out. I had studied the history of the Shroud for many years: I knew for certain of many things that actively proved that the cloth had existed before the Middle Ages. I had to look into the testing procedure. It was the start of three years of detective work which took me to all the places that figured in the radiocarbon testing.

As I tried to track down clues and find out more about the circumstances, I discovered that a multitude of contradictions and inconsistencies lay like a cloak over the course of the testing procedure. Soon it became apparent that the scientists who took part in the testing had something to hide. Questioned about details, they became entangled in contradictions and even resorted to falsification when they realized the official version of the events of the procedure was in jeopardy. The director of the investigation, Dr Michael Tite, was donated a million pounds for a new institute by unnamed 'friends and sponsors' (ironically, Dr Tite received the money on a Good Friday!), and Cardinal Ballestrero of Turin suddenly and unexpectedly went into retirement shortly after the publication of the test results, and was no longer available to answer questions on the subject.

By devious means and with great difficulty, I was finally able to obtain greatly magnified photographs of the pieces of cloth that the laboratories had been sent to put a date to. I had these photos examined by several institutes specializing in such work, and compared the digitized images on a computer with a photograph of each original fragment directly before it was cut off. The results were conclusive: the cloth pieces dated in the laboratories could not have come from the original cloth!

Pursuing my investigations I found out that the samples examined by the radiocarbon technique had been taken from a vestment that had been kept since 1296 in the basilica of Saint-Maximin in southern France, the cope of Saint Louis d'Anjou. This proved once and for all that the dating of the Turin Shroud had been manipulated: the idea was to present the cloth as a medieval forgery, and so put an end to all the discussions about whether Jesus had survived the crucifixion – discussions that were rocking the Christian Church to its foundations.

The full story of my astounding exposure of this massive fraud perpetrated on the public is to be found in *The Jesus Conspiracy: The Truth about the Resurrection*,[28] a book I wrote in conjunction with Dr Elmar R. Gruber.

The radiocarbon dating of 1988 has turned out to be no more than a cynical attempt at criminal deception. It certainly does not prove the Shroud to be a mere 700 years old – in fact, the intentional and fraudulent falsification of the test results is yet one more proof that the Turin Shroud really is the shroud in which Jesus was once wrapped, and that Jesus was still alive when he was 'laid to rest' in it.

Chapter Eight

'DEATH' AND 'RESURRECTION'

Two Burials in John's Gospel

(Many of the ideas put forward in this chapter are based on the work of Elmar R. Gruber, as published in the sections he contributed to *The Jesus Conspiracy*, which we wrote in conjunction with each other.)

Let us go back once more to that dramatic hour on Good Friday, when Jesus was nailed to the Cross and on the same day hastily put in the tomb.

The story of the Crucifixion comes down to us via the three Synoptic Gospels, the Gospel of John, and several apocryphal texts. Reading all four Gospel texts in parallel, which is quite an effort in itself, it is possible to discern a whole collection of points of variance in addition to all the points of agreement – a situation that makes it difficult to form a clear and consistent overall picture of events.

It is John's Gospel that generally exhibits the greatest divergence from the three other Gospels. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are for this very reason described as 'synoptic', meaning 'from the same viewpoint': the many points of agreement in the texts can be listed in order and compared side by side – a correlation that suggests they derive mainly from one identical source. John does not fit into this pattern. Although the text of John was completed in Ephesus towards the end of the first century, and was the last of the four Gospels to be written, it is considered to be the most authentic of all four narratives. In particular it includes such episodes that do not occur in the other Gospels as the wedding at Cana, the conversation with Nicodemus, and the raising to life of Lazarus. Its detailed and historically accurate descriptions

of topographical features (notably the layout and landmarks of Jerusalem before the Revolt of AD 66) lead to the conclusion that John himself, or the informant using his name, was personally present in these places at the time of Jesus. The strikingly mystical and Gnostic tone of his account, and the immediacy of his personal relationship with Jesus, suggest that John ought to be the most reliable witness not only to the events but also to the teachings of his master.[1]

Reading the text, we are at once given the impression that it is an eyewitness account we are hearing. Whereas the Synoptics merely state that Jesus received a burial according to Jewish custom, John tries to present the burial in the context of the discovery of the graveclothes on Easter morning, as actually seen by him or told to him at first hand. The Italian professor of literature Gino Zaninotto highlights this in an excellent piece of linguistic analysis – although he then comes to the somewhat audacious conclusion that John was an eyewitness also of the 'Ascension'.

In the middle of John's Gospel is one story that can perhaps be said to represent the crux of the entire Book: the account of the raising to life of Lazarus (John 11:1–45) – an episode that does not appear in any other biblical Gospel. A version of it was apparently once included in an early form of Mark's Gospel, but was later removed, evidently at the behest of Bishop Clement of Alexandria.[2]

The Lazarus story is of great significance to us here because, in telling it, John provides a detailed description of the burial customs of his time. Although the narrative is ambiguous on many points, with the result that there have been many different interpretations, one thing it states positively is that Lazarus was well and truly dead. He is described as being bound hand and foot in graveclothes, and the description in the original Greek includes the word *keiriai* (elsewhere in English translated as 'swathing bands'). This is where we encounter the first problem in translation: how are we to understand 'bound hand and foot'? The Jews are not known to have bound the limbs of the dead, except perhaps in order to transport the corpse to the grave.[3] The word *keiriai* refers to bands of linen long enough to wrap around the whole body. So we should not take this passage to mean that Lazarus was tied only at the wrists and ankles, but rather that his whole body was wrapped in linen bands *up to* the wrists and ankles, and *excluding* the hands and feet. Indeed, had Lazarus' feet been tightly tied, it is hard to see how he could have come out from the grave by himself

when Jesus commanded him to (John 11:44). In addition, Nonnos, the celebrated Greek epic poet of the late classical period, used the same word in his paraphrase of the Gospel of John, describing Lazarus as having been 'wrapped in linen bands from head to foot'.

Interestingly, John uses a quite different word for the cloths in which Jesus was wrapped in the tomb: *othonia*. The plural of *othonion*, it has no connotations of any specific part of the body, and is much more an equivalent of the generic term 'cloths' than of the more descriptive 'swathing bands'.

Lazarus' face was 'bound about' (*perideđemenos*) with something called a *soudarion* (literally 'a cloth with which to wipe away sweat', Latin *sudarium*). In this case it was probably being used as a chinstrap, bound around the head of the corpse to hold the lower jaw tight to the upper.

John again finds different words to describe the burial of Jesus. The face of Jesus was not bound about with a *soudarion*, but was instead 'wrapped' (*entetyligmenon*) in one. Indeed, he says quite clearly that the cloth was placed 'upon the head' (*epi tes kephales*), presumably to exclude other alternatives, particularly that the cloth was used to hold the mouth shut. In all the literature on the Turin Shroud – the works of Barbet, Bulst and Currer-Briggs, for example – there are constant references to the idea that a chinstrap can be seen in the image on the Shroud.[4] But there is actually no visible trace of any such band. It would at the very least have made some lasting impression on the hair of the beard and on the sides of the face. The 'chinstrap' is one of those odd vagaries superimposed on the folklore of the image by being somebody's pet hypothesis.

In using different vocabulary for different events, it would seem that the author of John's Gospel fully intended to draw a marked distinction between the burial of Lazarus and the burial of Jesus, and so point up the differences between two incidents that were superficially similar. He was in this way making it quite clear to any reader attentive enough that the two events were utterly and fundamentally incomparable. The raising of Lazarus from the dead is described in words and images all to do with the normal burial of a dead body. In Jesus' case, however, everything suggests that it was not an ordinary burial at all.

In the Lord's Tomb

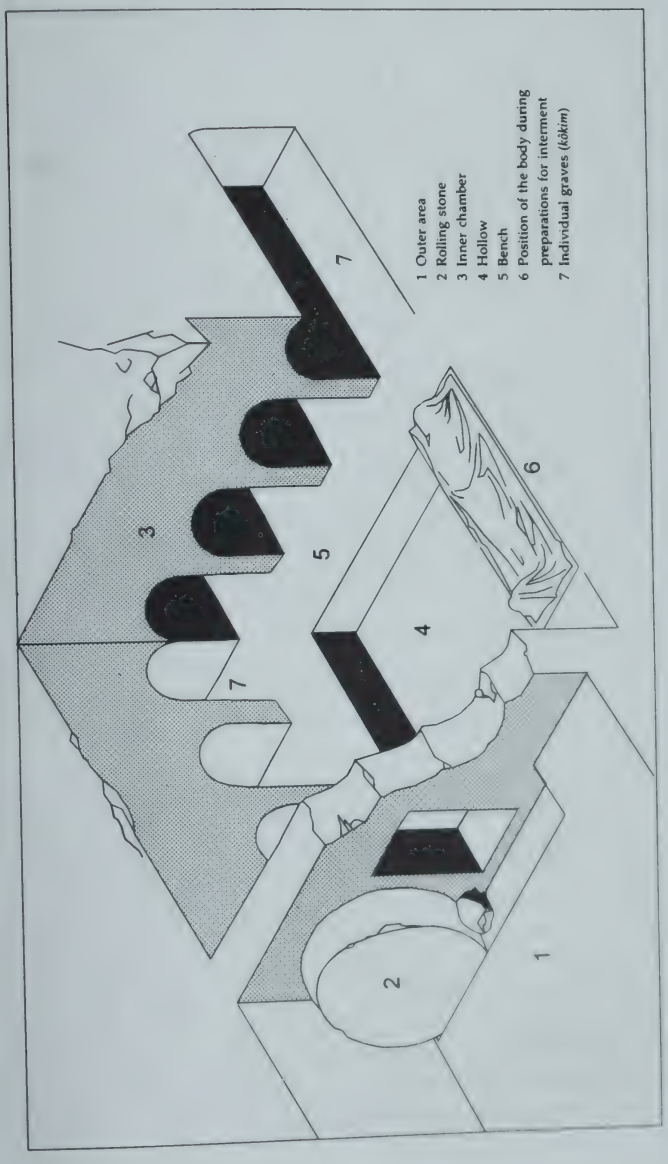
Let us continue our examination of these differences. Lazarus came forth (*ex-elthen*), and the word that is used implies that he came forth without any help. He made his way out of the cave that was being used as a grave, and was thereupon released from his linen wrappings so that he could move freely. Typically, a Jewish tomb consisted of a cavern excavated in a rocky hillside, in which shelf-like chambers about 50 centimetres wide, 80 centimetres high and 2 metres deep (*kôkim*, the plural of *kôk*) were cut. Corpses in their wrappings were deposited lengthways, head first, in these chambers.[5] Every indication, explicit and implicit, in the narrative supports the understanding that Lazarus' burial was in truth a final interment.

The burial of Jesus, however, is described in quite a different way. Jesus was not deposited in a chamber cut perpendicularly into the rock wall of a tomb, but set down on a stone surface or open ledge. On the morning of the 'resurrection', Mary Magdalene sees the 'angels in white', as they are called, 'the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain' (John 20:12). Jesus was not deposited lengthways into a *kôk*, for if he had been, no one could have sat at the head end.

At this point one possible objection is that Jesus could have been buried in what is called an Arcosol tomb. This form of tomb architecture is characterized by a large recess or vault carved at a height above the floor into the side wall of the burial chamber, above a stone platform or sarcophagoidal trough. In this case it would be quite possible for the 'angels' to sit at both ends of the corpse. But archaeological evidence is against this. Arcosol tombs were developed only during the early Byzantine period, some 200 years after Jesus' burial. Prior to this there was a short period when late Roman shaft tombs were in use. But the most widespread and typical tomb structure of Jesus' time was the chambered *kôkim* tomb, and quite evidently the tomb in which Jesus was placed was also of such construction.

The interior of a *kôkim* tomb was reached via an entrance below ground level, which was often closed with a movable stone. The tomb consisted of a large main cavern, in the sides of which a number of *kôkim* had usually been carved, each to take one body. At the centre of the cavern there was a square depression in the floor, which served as a drainage area. Each side of the depression, and at the same level as the entrance from outside, there was a sur-

face on which a corpse could be laid out for washing and oiling.[6] Even in the daytime it was dark enough in the tomb to require the use of lanterns set in niches: Jewish law did not permit burial after sunset or before dawn.



Reconstruction of a Kôkim Tomb Structure

John tells us that Jesus' favourite disciple ran to the grave (20:5) and 'stooping down, and looking in' saw the linen clothes. Mary Magdalene 'stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre' (20:11), and saw the two 'angels' at the place where Jesus had lain. Two conclusions may be derived from these statements. One is that the plan of Christ's tomb as reconstructed by Brother Hughes Vincent, and often reproduced, is altogether wrong. It suggests that Jesus lies in an Arcosol tomb, and in a chamber that is reached by passing right through another one first. It would be impossible to see the place where Jesus lay by stooping in front of the entrance.

The second conclusion is that these statements support our assumption that the burial of Jesus was not completed. If he had already been lying in a *kôk*, the place would again not be visible from the tomb entrance. The light passing through the very low doorway only reaches to the middle of the main cavern. The body of Jesus could therefore only have lain somewhere around the middle of the cavern, on the ledge around the central depression in the floor, and certainly not inside one of the tomb *kôkim*.

Now let us look more closely at the Greek text of John: 'Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound (*edesan*) it in linen clothes (*othoniois*) with the spices (*meta ton aromaton*), as the manner of the Jews is to bury (*entaphiazein*)' (John 19:40).

For various reasons the interpretation of this sentence has caused many commentators considerable difficulty. The verb *deo*, of which *edesan* is a derivative, ordinarily means 'to tie up', 'to bind fast'. But things are generally tied up with strips of fabric (*spargana, keiriai*), with ropes (*desmoi*) or with thongs, not with cloths. Savio avoids the problem by translating *deo* as 'to wrap up', on analogy with certain Greek texts in which it is used with the preposition *en*.[7]

In Mark (15:46) the verb used instead is *eneileo* a word that while it describes Jesus as covered with a cloth also emphasizes that the body was wrapped up quite tightly, almost done up like a parcel. But it still does not suggest a complete bandaging process as used to enwrap a mummy. The verb *kateilisso* would be more apt in expressing that, as used, for example, by Herodotus to describe the wrapping of an Egyptian mummy and on another occasion the bandaging of a Greek soldier's injury. But one specific usage of the verb *eneileo* in ancient Greek texts has to do with a certain way of preparing food: first 'wrapping' it in fig leaves.[8] The word was evidently used as the preferred term by which to describe how Jesus' body had been covered, in particular to make some reference to

the tight (perhaps because damp) binding caused by the aromatic substances absorbed in the cloth.

In order to justify the unusual terminology in this description, several linguistic commentators have suggested that some kind of embalming process was intended. They refer to the hundred pounds of aromatic substances procured by Nicodemus: 'And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight' (John 19:39). One hundred pounds – forty-five kilograms – is an enormous weight of relatively light materials! If the aloes and myrrh were in dried or powdered form, the quantity making up that weight would have occupied a whole palette of sacks, and Nicodemus would have needed a number of assistants to help in transporting the load. Transport would have been even more difficult if the substances were in suspension in wine, vinegar or oil.

The theologian Paul Billerbeck describes the event as if an embalming was to take place, using the aromatic substances suspended in oil.[9] But Rabbinic texts refer only to the external oiling of the bodies of the departed. The addition of spices is nowhere mentioned, let alone in these quantities: it was never part of Jewish customs, and nor was embalming.[10] It would be pointless, in any case, to perform an embalmment in the way described. To prevent the gases of decomposition from distending and then rupturing the body, the entrails would have had to be removed via an incision that was repulsive to the Jews on both aesthetic and religious grounds, and these substances if applied would not by themselves have been effective in halting further decomposition. Many biblical authorities in consequence find this passage in John's Gospel both incomprehensible and perplexing. One commentator, Haenchen, can only conclude, 'The writer of this verse had no idea of Jewish burial rites, and knew nothing about embalming either.'

But let us pause a moment to consider the matter. We have already seen that John makes a clear and deliberate distinction between the burials of Lazarus and of Jesus, and it is most likely that he chose his words with equally careful deliberation to disclose to those who could read between the lines a situation that is not readily apparent in a superficial understanding of the text. The attentive reader would already have been alerted to the greatest difference between the burial of Lazarus and the burial of Jesus – that the first burial had been completed and the second remained unfinished. But why would Jesus' believers and followers have

given their beloved master a half-finished burial after being in such a hurry to get him into the nearby tomb? It makes no sense at all.

Scriptural commentators have a lot of difficulty with this strange 'burial' of Jesus. They often try to sidestep it by saying that Jesus' burial took place in untoward circumstances: at twilight on Good Friday just as the Sabbath was about to begin, a day on which interment was not permitted, causing everything to have to be done with undue haste. The burial of Jesus was thus undertaken at such speed as only to fulfil the minimum of the customary burial rites, and to leave the actual interment incomplete. But this idea makes little sense, and for a number of reasons.

For one thing, it is just not accurate to claim that complete burial was not permitted on the Sabbath. The Rabbinic texts state no such thing in specific terms. One text says that complete burial is allowed on the Sabbath as on any other day; another says that in such cases the corpse should first be covered with sand to preserve it until the Sabbath is over, when the burial can be completed.[11] At the same time, by following Jesus Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus had already taken up a stance that represented the abrogation of their former adherence to Jewish customs and tradition, so it seems unlikely that they would be particularly concerned to observe such customs when it came to events and actions of such momentous importance.

There was no need, then, for a curtailed, hasty burial rite performed simply to comply with the customs. Nonetheless, there is every indication that Jesus' followers acted with maximum speed and maximum efficiency following a well thought-out plan. So what really happened in the tomb cavern?

Let us read the crucial sentence again in the light of the conclusions we have already come to: 'Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury.' The spices were aloes and myrrh, this much we know. Myrrh was used as an ingredient for embalming by the Egyptians, but did not feature in the burial rites of the Jews. Instead, Jewish custom prescribes that the body of the deceased should be washed and oiled, the hair cut and tidied, and that the body should then be dressed again and the face covered with a cloth. Washing the body was of such critical importance that it had to be done even on the Sabbath day.[12] Yet there is no mention of any of this in John's Gospel. Nor was there any oiling of the body. Instead, as we are told, the women came to the tomb on Sunday to oil Jesus' body. Whatever Joseph and Nicodemus were doing, it

had absolutely nothing to do with Jewish burial rites. John says that they buried Jesus in a way that was customary to the Jews – and then goes on to describe a burial which directly contravenes the custom!

Now why should he do this? Did he really not know the burial rites? Of course he knew them, because he described a standard burial in the story of Lazarus. Here too, then, just as we had to discern a deeper truth in the comparison of differences in the descriptions of Lazarus' and Jesus' burials, we have to discern what John was really trying to get across by obviously contradicting himself. So what happened in that rock-hewn tomb if it was not a burial?

The Mysterious 'Aromatic Substances'

The most unexpected feature of all that is described in connection with the burial and the tomb is the laying in of that extraordinarily large quantity of herbs. What was the point of them – for they had nothing to do with a burial?

Contrary to the view of some authors that the species of aloe mentioned by John is *Aloe perryi*,[13] it makes more sense to assume that the species used was instead *Aloe vera*.[14] *Aloe vera* is a plant native to the south-western portion of the Arabian Peninsula and to the offshore island of Socotra (which is why it is occasionally called *Aloe soccotrina*), where it grows together with over a dozen other types of aloe. Its south-west Arabian habitat was not far from the trade route that led from southern Arabia to the Mediterranean in classical times. A fleshy, juicy plant, it could quite easily survive the long caravan and sea trade routes without drying out, and it is well known that a brisk trade in plants from south-west Arabia with dealers in Palestine and the adjoining areas took place. Aloes were used in medicine and to make incense as far back as in the second and third millennia BC. A sticky gel taken from the plants was used for various purposes in antiquity, notably for healing wounds, topical inflammations and burns. The gel can be obtained by scraping off thin cells of leaf pulp (parenchyma) from the harder outer layers. The yellow resinous exudate that oozes from cut stems dries to form a waxy mass. In the ancient medicinal herb markets this was sold under the name bitter aloes, a compound rich in phenols, especially aloin.[15]

The second type of spice applied by Nicodemus was myrrh, a

gum-resin derived from shrubs of the genus *Commiphora*, which belongs to the family Burseraceae. The aromatic fragrance of myrrh played an important part in ancient rituals in India and the Orient. The holy oil with which the tabernacle and the ark of the ancient Israelites were anointed also contained myrrh, as one of the 'principal spices' (Exodus 30:23). Records in ancient Egypt describe how myrrh came from the legendary land of Punt (which was probably located on the coast of what is now Somalia). Hippocrates praised the disinfectant power of myrrh. It was used from very early times for the medication of wounds. In the Middle Ages myrrh was considered to be extremely important in the treatment of plague and other forms of infectious disease.

Both substances, aloes and myrrh, were commonly used in the treatment of large areas of injured tissue because they could easily be compounded as ointments and tinctures. Some specialists claim that the Jews often mixed myrrh with ladanum, the resin of the rock rose (*Cistus* species, not to be confused with the opiate laudanum).[16] This was used especially for plasters and bandages.[17] It is evident that such mixtures represented the universally trusted means of achieving the most rapid and effective healing of wounds, combined with the greatest possible protection against infection, at the time of Jesus.

There can be no doubt that Nicodemus procured a truly amazing quantity of highly specific medicinal herbs for the sole purpose of treating the wounds on Jesus' body. Such spices could have had no other function.

The realization gradually dawns that John's style of writing was very carefully cryptic enough both to reveal a great deal about a singularly important event to readers who have their wits about them, and to conceal that same information from the eyes of people who do not know enough to look for it. Jesus was not described as being buried – could not be buried – because he had not died on the Cross!

The author of John's Gospel, who was an eyewitness of the events at Jesus' tomb (or got the details from someone who was) and was also fully briefed by Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, wrote in a way that would tell anyone who knows how to read between the lines what really happened during and immediately after the Crucifixion. He makes it quite clear, therefore, that while the outward trappings of an ordinary Jewish burial were maintained and kept visible, in reality there were efforts behind the scenes to 'bring Jesus back to life' in the privacy of the

tomb cavern, under the direction of Joseph and Nicodemus. And the loyal friends of Jesus did not attempt this by endeavouring to perform a miracle like those he had performed himself, but by applying the art of medical healing.

Crucifixion: The Medical Facts

The events that took place in the rock tomb, not far from the site of execution, must be interpreted as an attempt by members of an Essene community to treat the seriously wounded Jesus with medicinal herbs. Why Mark should employ the verb *eneileo* now becomes clear: the word was generally used in connection with the cooking of food wrapped in leaves, as we have seen. To treat Jesus, the Therapeuts evidently packed him round with a fairly tight, sweat-promoting poultice that incorporated a large quantity of herbs, in overall effect not too unlike the culinary method. John's *edesan othoniois* ('and wound it in linen clothes') has to be seen in this context for its true meaning to be recognizable. What was meant was not a mere covering or wrapping, but an actual bandaging in strips that went around the whole body, tightly encasing it. Dioscorides, the Cilician physician of the first century AD, also used both the verbs *deo* and *eneileo* to denote wrapping in linen cloths.[18]

There was obviously no intention of burying Jesus. Instead, he was to be brought to a safe place where he could rest in peace while he healed. What better place for someone to 'rest in peace' than the tomb of a person believed dead! Of course we are not told anything about washing the corpse, a procedure so important in Jewish burials. Joseph did not wash Jesus, because he was not dead. In medical terms, washing was certainly not a good idea anyway. The act of washing would only have caused the numerous wounds caked with dried blood to start bleeding all over again. Joseph and Nicodemus must have applied the curative herbal solution to the body with the utmost care, to make sure that this did not happen.

In the face of such radical conclusions, it is right to wonder how possible it is for a person to survive crucifixion at all.

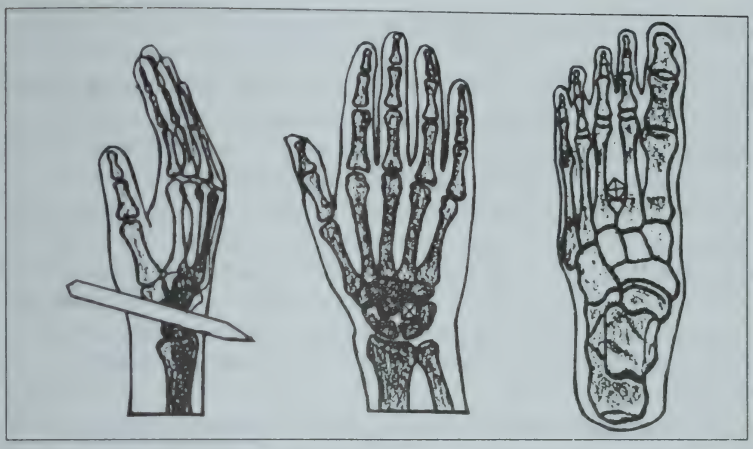
Death on a cross was considered by the Romans to be the most demeaning and frightening method of execution. Cicero called it the 'most horrible and repulsive form of capital punishment'. Only

in exceptional cases were Roman citizens ever sentenced to this punishment, and they were always citizens of the lowest social class. But in territories occupied by the Romans, crucifixion was as much a medium of execution as a deterrent, keeping the potentially rebellious peoples docile and subservient. Palestine had long been notorious as a hotbed of nationalist fervour. Between the time of the Maccabees in 167 BC and Bar Kochba in AD 134, there were altogether some sixty-two episodes of revolt, war and rioting against domination by faithless outsiders, first by the Greeks, and then by the Romans. All but one of these disturbances started in Galilee – Jesus' home area. It is therefore hardly surprising that crucifixions were an almost routine affair there.

Crucifixion was alien to the Jews. For them the lawful means of capital punishment were stoning, burning, beheading and strangling. But according to Mosaic Law it was permissible to hang up a criminal who had already been executed 'on wood', as an additional punishment and humiliation: 'For he that is hanged is accursed of God' (Deuteronomy 21:23). The crucifixion of a criminal was therefore under no circumstances to be allowed to defile the Sabbath, the beginning of which is represented by twilight on the preceding day, the Day of Preparation.

In order to avoid provoking even worse civil unrest, the Romans made sure they did not wilfully offend the religious sentiments of the Jews. Once the official Roman death sentence *ibis in crucem* ('you shall go to the cross') was passed, care was taken to see that the execution was completed before the Sabbath. In the case of Jesus' crucifixion, therefore, the greatest haste was called for because it took place on the Day of Preparation. It had to be over before sunset. But that was not easy to arrange, because the special feature of crucifixion was that its agonizing torture was protracted over time. It was carried out in such a way as to extend the pain and misery of the guilty usually over a period of some days until they eventually expired.

There was considerable variety in the actual structure of the cross and the way the the victim was attached to it. If the full body weight of the crucified person was suspended solely at the wrists, death would occur within five to six hours through gradual suffocation, and not through blood loss or other any cause. In this extreme posture, breathing is so severely curtailed that the body is no longer properly supplied with oxygen. After a relatively short time, unconsciousness results, and the consequent hanging forward of the head then further reduces air intake.[19] To prevent such



Nails through the hands and feet do not necessarily damage any bones or major blood vessels. Without some form of analgesic these injuries would certainly have been very painful, but in no way fatal.

an 'easy' death, a small wooden cross-piece called the *suppedaneum* was often fixed to the vertical post of the cross, on which the victim might prop himself up for as long as his strength allowed. This cross-piece should not be imagined as a short plank nailed on at an angle, as is depicted in Byzantine crucifixion scenes. The suppedaneum was a small, horizontal crossbeam, which the crucified person was able actually to stand on.

Not for nothing do the oldest pictures show the crucified person standing, as for example in the 'mock' crucifixion of the Cappella Palatina.

Attachment to the cross was by binding with thongs or by transfixing with nails at the hands and feet. The crucified person could then delay his death by his own effort, by supporting his weight with his arms at the point of attachment or with his legs on the crossbeam at the feet. Occasionally a piece of wood to sit on (*sedile*) was also fixed at the appropriate height, which presumably also alleviated the pain somewhat while yet prolonging the agony even further. As Nero's personal philosopher Seneca wrote in a letter, 'The life of the person sentenced to this punishment trickled away drop by drop.'

The Gospels report that Jesus was nailed on the cross at the sixth hour (12 noon) and gave up his spirit at the ninth hour (about three in the afternoon). Towards evening, the man taken for dead

was removed from the cross. This unexpectedly rapid death on the cross was of concern to Pilate himself: obviously extremely surprised, he asked the leading centurion if everything was in order (Mark 15:44). That same concern and surprise is still in evidence today. Many authorities, especially expert medical ones, have undertaken considerable experimentation and research to try to come up with an explanation for the rather suspiciously rapid 'death' of Jesus. No author has found the problem easy to solve. The most common idea is that the harsh treatment of Jesus before his crucifixion must have been responsible: it had so severely undermined his physical condition that he succumbed to the torture of crucifixion after only a short time. Such explanations are pretty flimsy.

For one thing, unlike the strictly ascetic monastic community of the Essenes, Jesus was no frail ascetic,[20] but relatively tall, strong and robust (according to the Shroud, about 1.82 metres tall and 79 kilograms in weight), a man 'in his prime'. After a night of ill-treatment he nonetheless talked to the court the next day in a very clever way, obviously in full possession of his mental faculties, as would not be possible in a state of exhaustion. Moreover, Jesus was relieved by Simon of Cyrene of the burden of having to carry the crossbeam (*patibulum*) of his cross for much of the distance of about 550 to 650 metres from Pilate's Praetorium to the site of execution.

That Simon of Cyrene was co-opted at all has been taken by many commentators as proof that Jesus was in a very weakened state, no longer able to bear the weight of the beam. This too has to be queried. As for the scourging, Jesus was treated no differently from any other sentenced person. Everyone sentenced to death by crucifixion first endured such torture. Under Jewish law, thirty-nine lashes were the maximum that could be administered; a third of these on the chest or front side, the remainder on the back. The priest carried out this punishment in the synagogue with a three-thonged whip of calfskin. Of course we are not told whether they kept to the correct number of lashes in the case of Jesus. In the *Gospel of Peter*'s description of Jesus' being nailed to the cross it says, 'But he kept silent, as if he felt no pain.' It is probable that during his training Jesus became adept in the art of mastering pain through meditation, just like Indian yogis. Exercises that lead to this ability are practised by a great number of religious sects throughout the East: they have been scientifically investigated and are well documented.

In most cases, the arms of the sentenced person were first fixed to the *patibulum*, which he then had to carry on his shoulders to the place of execution. The weight of this crossbeam varied between about 18 and 30 kilograms. So considerable strength was needed to be able to carry the heavy load. The Gospel accounts tell us that Jesus was only nailed to the cross at the site of execution. He was laid naked on the ground, where his wrists were nailed to the *patibulum*, and the *patibulum* was nailed to the upright post (*stipes*). Then the whole construction, with him on it, was raised to the vertical.

Strange, is it not, that the death throes of other victims of crucifixion lasted so much longer than in Jesus' case, considering his well-trained and strong constitution. In the autobiography of Flavius Josephus, whose writings tell us so much about the customs and events in Palestine at the time of Jesus, there is an informative passage concerning a crucified man who recovered after being taken down from the cross:

> I was sent by Titus Caesar with Ceralius and a thousand riders to a certain town by the name of Thecoa, to find out whether a military camp could be established there. On my return I saw many prisoners who had been crucified, and recognized three of them as former companions of mine. Much affected, it was with tears in my eyes that I went to Titus and told him about them. He at once gave the order that they should be taken down and given the best treatment so they might recover. But two of them died while being treated by the doctor; the third did get better.[21]

It is difficult to see how Jesus could have given up the ghost so early, and that 'with a loud cry', a departing gesture which to the medical experts is both incomprehensible and perplexing. A closer study, however, shows that this too is a significant indication that Jesus was taken unconscious from the Cross.

The way the two men crucified next to him died is described in graphic detail in John's Gospel:

> The Jews therefore, because it was the [Day of] Preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the sabbath day, (for that sabbath day was an high day,) besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.
>
> Then came the soldiers, and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him.
>
> (John 19:31–32)

So the two criminals crucified with Jesus, who had certainly

undergone the same sort of ill-treatment he had beforehand, were still alive. Their legs were broken so they could no longer take their weight on their legs and straighten up, and so they painfully suffocated to death within a few hours.

'But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs' (John 19:33). This is very strange, if not inexplicable, behaviour by the Roman soldiers. Why did such hardened soldiers not break Jesus' legs too, to make sure of his death? The scriptural interpretation provided – that the word of the prophet in Exodus 12:46 had to be fulfilled ('. . . neither shall ye break a bone thereof') – is no help at all. The question has to be asked instead what the roughnecks could have been thinking of to exempt Jesus from the usual cruelty. They must – and rightly – have had their doubts about whether Jesus was really dead; they must at the very least have viewed his unconsciousness form with scepticism. Otherwise they would not have bothered to thrust the spear in his side. Surely it was only to be expected that the brutalized soldiers would break the legs of all the crucified men, to be sure that they were all dead. Up to this point, moreover, Jesus had apparently been treated with even more than the usual contempt, suffering blows to the face, given the mock sceptre, and having the crown of thorns put on his head. Why this sudden change of mood – this 'privileged' and unreasonably compassionate treatment?

The Gospels provide no consistent answer to this question. The only point they agree on is that Jesus died as early as the ninth hour, uttering a loud cry, while those crucified next to him visibly lingered on in their wretchedness. According to John (19:34), one of the soldiers drove his spear into Jesus's side, and blood and water flowed out. Luke and Matthew contribute nothing to this scenario because neither of them mentions this event. Mark, however, leaves us an interesting clue (15:44–45). Pilate, surprised that Jesus is already dead, summons the centurion, who confirms the death, and Pilate then releases the body of Jesus. The centurion, who has obviously checked the death of Jesus to his satisfaction, is the same one who, moved by the events during the Crucifixion, praises Jesus as the true Son of God (Mark 15:39; Matthew 27:54; Luke 23:47). Who was this centurion?

In the apocryphal literature surrounding Pilate he is called Longinus and represented as the captain of the guard in charge of the Crucifixion. And according to a tradition to which Gregory of Nyssa himself testified, Longinus was said later to have become the bishop of his home territory, Cappadocia. This 'change of

heart' may mean that he had some connection with Jesus and his followers before the Crucifixion, and may even have been a secret believer in Jesus himself. Many of the problems surrounding the events of the Crucifixion would then instantly be resolved. Joseph of Arimathea, Nicodemus and the centurion Longinus were among the secret followers of Jesus. Influential in position and rank, they were informed well enough in advance about what the publicly seditious advent of Jesus would lead to. Joseph was highly respected as a member of the Jewish Sanhedrin. Since the second century BC this had been the supreme High Council, with authority over all affairs of state in which the Jewish religion was involved, including judicature. It consisted of seventy members under the chairmanship of the High Priest. Nicodemus, who was initiated by Jesus under cover of night (John 3:1–22), was also a Jewish councillor. Thanks to these offices, Joseph and Nicodemus had doubtless been kept well informed about the time and place of the execution, and were thus able to plan the rescue of their master. There is an echo of the advance infomation given to Nicodemus to be found in a much revered medieval legend that is part of the stories of the saints: it tells how Nicodemus, in a letter sent to Mary Magdalene, warns Jesus of an attack by the Jews while he was in Ephraim (John 11:53–54).[22]

Joseph and Nicodemus knew that the crucifixion itself could not be avoided. But if they could manage to get Jesus down off the cross early enough, and provided everything else went as planned, it would be possible to keep him alive, and he would probably be able to continue his mission under cover. It was crucially important to the whole operation that the apostles were not involved. They had gone into hiding in fear of persecution. No action would be taken against the respected councillors Joseph and Nicodemus or the Roman centurion. So there was just a short time in which the risky venture might be carried out successfully.

The Wound in the Side and the Potent Drink

Let us return to the spear-thrust into Jesus' side. A close look at the original Greek reveals that the verb used to describe the thrust of the soldier, *nyssein*, has the meaning 'to prick', 'to puncture', and does not really apply to a thrust with full force, let alone deep penetration. In the Vulgate (the universally known Latin translation of

the Bible), the verb used is *aperire*, an inaccurate translation basically meaning 'to open up'. But the fundamental meaning, the intended meaning, is something different again. The action was a procedure that served as a kind of 'official confirmation' of death: if the body showed no reaction to a superficial stab, it could be assumed that the person was dead. It was probably the centurion mentioned in the Gospels who performed this test himself. It was certainly not meant to be a death thrust – after all, Jesus was believed to be dead already, and so much so that his legs were left unbroken. An experienced soldier would in any case hardly have intended to kill by thrusting a spear into the side: for that it should have been from the front, through the heart. The Roman soldiers of the day generally used the type of spear called a *hasta* or *pilum*, with a thin, tapering blade about 25 to 40 centimetres long, broadening just before the shaft. Like a stiletto, the blade was just right for scratching the skin a little to see if the crucified person showed any reaction.

Scriptural authorities find it difficult to explain the discharge of blood and water. Some can only regard it as a miracle, in consideration of how the circulation stops at death. Others discern more significance in a symbolic interpretation of the elements blood and water. Scientific explanations have also been educed, notably to the effect that the 'water' was in fact blood serum, which separates as blood coagulates. But decomposition of the blood in that manner only begins six hours after death, at the earliest!

But we must not discard this passage of John's Gospel as of no significance. We must assume instead that our eyewitness informant meant to lay special emphasis on the blood and water. For the sentence that follows this passage runs, 'And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe' (19:35). This is crucial, and fits nicely with what we already know of John's style of writing – a depiction on two levels, as it were: an outwardly obvious description for undiscerning readers, and a number of cryptic references strewn throughout the text for those who know how to read between the lines to discover for themselves. The special emphasis so evidently put on testifying to the blood and water that flowed from Jesus' side is actually intended to make it clear that Jesus was still alive.

Even if many centuries were to pass before the circulatory nature of the human blood system was discovered, it was common knowledge at the time of Jesus that corpses do not bleed and blood serum is not seen on the wounds of a body that has just died.

Origen (185–254) himself, who believed for a fact that Jesus was dead at the time the blood and water issued from the wound, felt obliged to point out that corpses do not bleed.

The expression *blood and water* occurs as an idiom in other languages. In the ornate Arabic language, for example, it is used to emphasize the force of an event. In modern English we can say that someone 'sweats blood' when making a great effort (without meaning that blood actually oozes through the pores of the skin), but the German equivalent is 'to sweat blood and water', *Blut und Wasser schwitzen*. It might well be, then, that the same expression used in describing a wound means no more than that a considerable amount of blood is visible. Jesus was obviously only apparently dead. The quantity of blood discharged, and the emphasis put on it by immediately asserting that it was a true observation, were meant to point to this very fact.

Everything that was to happen, once the spear-thrust had confirmed death, had been carefully arranged beforehand by Joseph and his assistants. But the man from Arimathea had begun making the necessary preparations a long time before.

The first action the wealthy Joseph had taken was to purchase a garden in the immediate vicinity of the Crucifixion site.[23] With wise foresight, he decided to have a new tomb excavated from the rock on the estate – somewhere to which a supposedly dead body could be brought quickly for safety. That it should be a tomb unusued till then was essential: to lay Jesus to rest in a tomb in which others were already buried would have given rise to strong legal and moral objections, for the presence of the body of an executed criminal would normally be taken to dishonour the bodies of the faithful who already lay in the tomb. There could be no objection to a 'burial' in an empty tomb, particularly since, as Josephus reports, political criminals who were executed by the Romans – as Jesus was – might certainly be afforded an honourable burial such as was denied to an ordinary criminal.[24] Naturally, Joseph of Arimathea could not say that he was busy preparing a tomb for Jesus. The Gospels therefore have it that Joseph brought the body of Jesus to lie in his own new family grave.

The Gospel passage stating that it was a tomb for Joseph's own use was intended to be taken literally by undiscerning readers who would not think twice about it.[25] Actually, the new tomb constructed in the garden near Golgotha was not meant for the dead at all, neither Joseph and his family nor anyone else. It was intended solely as a practical precaution, to avoid having to move the

seriously wounded Jesus very far should they succeed in getting him off the Cross soon enough. Jesus' persecutors would meanwhile contentedly think him dead and buried.

The fact that the Crucifixion took place on the Day of Preparation was, if anything, an advantage, because it meant they could greatly speed up the 'burial' without arousing suspicion. Of course they had to make sure that Jesus really did seem to have died. This too they could not just leave to chance.

The Gospels tell of one other thing that happened just before Jesus is described as dying on the Cross:

> Now there was set a vessel full of vinegar: and they filled a spunge with vinegar, and put it upon hyssop [a plant used for ritual daubing], and put it to his mouth.
>
> When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.
>
> (John 19:29–30)

How did Jesus come (apparently) to die immediately after he had taken the bitter drink? Was it really vinegar that he was given? It was fully in line with Jewish custom to offer a person sentenced to death wine spiced with myrrh or incense in order to alleviate the pain with its slight narcotic effect. A passage in the Talmud states, 'The one on his way to execution was given a piece of incense in a cup of wine, to help him fall asleep' (Sanh. 43a). But there is no mention in the Gospels of a spiced wine. All the evangelists agree that it was a liquid with a very bitter taste. In Latin, 'vinegar' is *acetum*, closely related to the old stem *ac-* 'sharp', and *acid* in English. The Roman soldiers not only allowed Jesus to be given the drink, one of them even helped Jesus to take it (Matthew 27:48; Mark 15:36; Luke 23:36; John 19:29).

Let us look more closely at how it happened. The sponge was offered to Jesus on a hyssop stem. Hyssop is a plant with a weak stem hardly suitable for holding up a wet sponge with. Even a bundle of hyssop stems might not have sufficient rigidity to make it possible, although Jesus on the Cross may not have been very high off the ground. On some crosses, the sentenced person was fixed with the feet only just above the soil, and in such a case the sponge would not have to be lifted up to any real height to be offered. But perhaps the instrument used to offer Jesus the 'vinegar' has been subject to a simple linguistic mistake – *hyssos* 'a short spear' has all this time been understood as *hyssopos* 'hyssop'. It is a soldier who offers Jesus the sponge, according to the Synoptic

authors, so that it is more than merely possible, it is likely, that some such verbal error occurred. We might even have reason to suppose that it was the centurion Longinus who raised the sponge to the lips of Jesus on his spear.[26]

The drink of vinegar is mentioned in John's narrative in a way that makes it look as if the vinegar had been brought to the site of the Crucifixion for the very purpose. It was a part of the preparations that Joseph, Nicodemus and the centurion had made in order to carry out their plan. What the bitter liquid actually was can only be guessed at. In those days there was a wide assortment of analgesic and narcotic substances available: the healing arts of the period were excellent at compounding mixtures with different effects on the body. Perhaps the drink was a bitter wine to which a measured quantity of opium had been added. The exceptional anaesthetic and sedative power of opium was well known to the Jews even in pre-Christian times. Opium is the dried form of the milky juice obtained from unripe seed-heads of one species of poppy (*Papaver somniferum*). This poppy was widespread in Palestine, so it is certainly possible that Jesus was given opium dissolved in some liquid while on the Cross.

The narcotic effect of opium is so strong that it can lead to a state of complete torpor, in which a person has no external sensation whatever. The principal alkaloid in opium (its most active constituent) is morphine, which is a powerful sedative and narcotic, and which can depress respiration. A second alkaloid in opium, papaverine, has no analgesic effect but is an excellent muscle-relaxant.

In combination, and together with other pharmaceutical substances, opiate solutions are not difficult to adjust to have any specifically required effect. Indeed, such a drug cocktail would have been ideal for the purposes of Joseph and his colleagues: not only was Jesus given the best of pain-killers, the dose was designed to make him lose consciousness in a short time and so be able to hang limply 'dead' on the Cross. The appearance of sudden death was enhanced by the fact that opium reduces and sharply slows the heartbeat, it depresses breathing to an extraordinary degree, and it renders the body completely limp. And yet, administered in the correct dosage, as known to the experienced Essene Therapeuts, it constituted no real danger to the heart – on the contrary, it was actually beneficial to it.

On the other hand, perhaps the supposed drink of vinegar instead contained the active ingredients of the sacred drink of the

Indians and Persians, Soma and Haoma (respectively). Persian cultic worship of Mithras included a Haoma sacrifice very similar to the Christian Mass (Holy Communion or Eucharist). Professor Seydel writes:

> The form of the sacrifice of Haoma was identical to the usual Persian sacrifices for the dead. Small round pieces of bread the size of a thaler coin were offered up and consumed with the Haoma drink: Haoma was originally the pressed juice of the soma plant *Asclepias acida*, with which the Vedic Aryans sprinkled the sacrificial fire. It was considered a symbol of divine life, a drink of the gods, and the drink of immortality . . .[27]

Soma, the sacred drink of India, enabled an adept to enter a death-like state for several days, and to awaken afterwards in an elated state that lasted a few more days. In this state of ecstasy, a 'higher consciousness' spoke through the adept, and he had visionary powers. In addition to *Asclepias acida*, the Soma might also have contained Indian hemp (*Cannabis indica*) – tradition has it that it featured in the drink of Zarathustra, at least. Pictures of *Asclepias acida* are found inscribed by the graves of the early Christians in the catacombs of Rome, where it is shown as a variety that bears longish fruits – a variety not to be found anywhere in Europe.

A European equivalent of *Asclepias acida* (which is a milkweed), in many respects, is the swallowwort (*Vincetoxicum hirundinaria*). Its efficacy as an antidote to poison is demonstrated by its Latin name: *vince-toxicum* is literally 'defeat the poison'. Dioscorides, the Greek physician and pharmacologist of the first century, called the plant the 'dog strangler' in his *Materia Medica*, and wrote that the leaves mixed with meat could kill dogs, wolves and foxes (*Mat. Med.* 4,80). Yet the poison could also be used as an antidote for the bites of poisonous animals (*Mat. Med.* 3,92). A botanical reference book written in 1563 (Mattioli, p.337) also eulogizes it: 'This is a splendid root against all poisons, of consummate substance and quality, which is why it is called *Vince-toxicum* in Latin – that is, conqueror of every poison. It is thus used even against the plague, and taken in wine, after which one sweats profusely.' Pronounced sweating and a dry mouth (note 'I thirst', John 19:28) are symptoms typical of poisoning. In Switzerland, swallowwort is called the 'Master-herb', and in Austria, 'Jewish herb' or 'White Cross herb'. Could there just possibly be an ancient memory of the plant's most historically important use echoed in these names?

A magical potion that has the property of putting living people

into a long-lasting state resembling death is by no means unheard of, and is even comparatively common in stories and literature. The best-known example is *Romeo and Juliet*. In every case, the 'death' involved is actually a state resembling coma, in which all the life-signs, such as respiration, heartbeat and pulse, are no longer noticeable.

Had Jesus actually been close to suffocation on the Cross – and it is suffocation that virtually all the forensic experts assume was the cause of death – the loud cry before he 'died', as specifically mentioned by the three Synoptic evangelists, would have been quite imposssible. A choking, breathless person could hardly have managed to gasp out a whisper. But Jesus cried out. And John relates that, 'When Jesus therefore had received the vinegar, he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost' (19:30). Jesus was able to say these words once he had taken the drink and felt its narcotic effect increasing. He was able to say them because he was close not to death but to a deep, induced state of stillness.

Traces on the Cloth

Now let us compare what we are told in the Gospel accounts with what we know about the impression of the body on the Turin Shroud. There are bloodstains on the Shroud. If a corpse had been buried in the linen cloth, the burial could not have been according to Jewish law because the corpse would then first have been washed down with warm water.

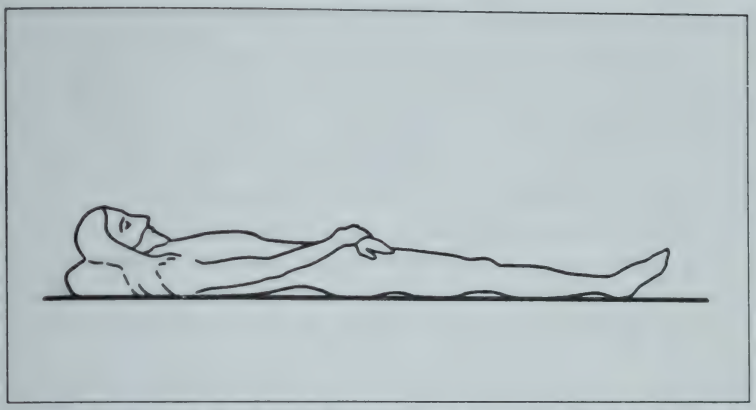
The peculiar position of the body is also striking. In a book repudiating the authenticity of the Turin Shroud, Joseph Blinzler argues that it is '. . . hardly conceivable that the disciples placed the hands in such an unseemly and impractical position, as seen in the image of the Turin Shroud, while interring the Messiah.'[28] Apart from the fact that no one has ever said that the disciples were in the sepulchre at the time, it should be pointed out that the position of Jesus' body precisely matches that of the skeletons buried in the cemetery of the Essene monastic settlement at Qumran near the Dead Sea. 'The position of the corpses in their graves is generally identical . . . As a rule, the body is in a supine position, the head to the south, and the hands are crossed together over the abdomen, or lie at the sides.'[29]

Jesus is supposed to have hung dead on the cross for three hours. If it happened, the consequences can be described with absolute certainty. According to all modern medical authorities, rigor mortis would have begun setting in some thirty or so minutes after death. The muscles of the body would have become completely stiff and immobile in three to six hours, depending on the temperature of the surroundings – the higher the ambient temperature, the faster the stiffening. Rigor mortis is caused by complex biochemical processes, but centres principally on a decline in levels of the metabolic energy compound ATP (adenosine triphosphate) after cessation of the heartbeat. The entire skeletal musculature becomes utterly rigid in whatever position the body has assumed in death, and only when rigor mortis relaxes and wears off – after four to seven days – can the body's posture be changed.

Once Jesus lost consciousness on the Cross, his body would have sagged. His weight, previously supported primarily by his legs as held fast by the nail through his feet, would instead have been taken by his arms as held fast by the nails through the wrists. His legs would thus have bent acutely at the knees. His head would have fallen forwards, his chin coming to rest at the top of his breastbone. And after the three or four hours that the body is said to have been left on the cross, it would have become rigid in this position. But a close look at the impression of the back of the body on the Shroud immediately reveals that the whole of Jesus' body was laid out quite flat on the cloth. The legs are straight, not bent, and the arms were evidently mobile when positioned (or they would have tended to spring apart to the posture of the Crucifixion).

A few Shroud commentators have suggested that the arms were probably bound together at the wrists. But any such cords or straps would have obscured the bleeding at the wrists, which can plainly be seen on the cloth. Monsignor Giulio Ricci, a member of the Centre for Shroud Research in Rome, has an individual solution to the problem: he assumes that the Shroud was itself tied tightly around the rigidly stiff and grotesquely bent corpse with external cords.[30] But this explanation is utter nonsense, for the impression clearly shows that the Shroud was initially spread out flat, both underneath and on top of the body. Otherwise extreme distortions in the width would be apparent (rendering the computerized scan impossible).

The fact that there was obviously no rigor mortis at the time when Jesus was taken down from the Cross is proof enough that



The body lay stretched out quite flat on an even surface, and was slightly cushioned (with cloths).

he was not dead. And even more cogent evidence is provided by the bloodstains visible on the Shroud.

For two separate bouts of bleeding can be clearly distinguished. Firstly, there are traces of the blood which flowed when Jesus was nailed to the Cross. Secondly, there are vestiges of the fresh blood which flowed from the body when Jesus was already lying horizontally in the cloth!

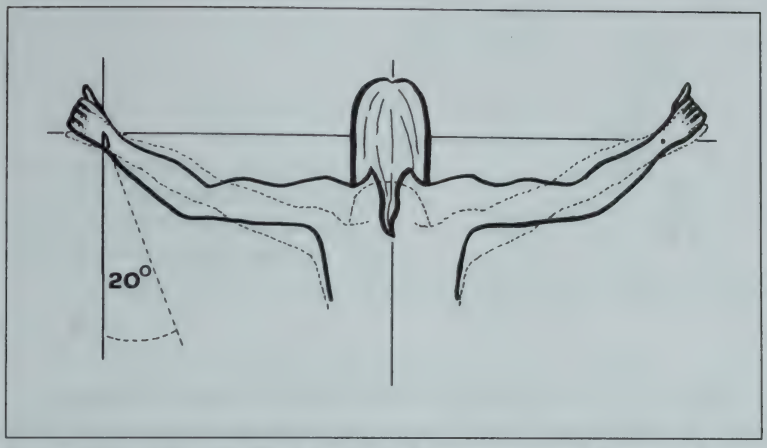
To take the bloodstains on the head first: the sharp points of the mass of thorns which was pressed mockingly on to Jesus' head would have left minute punctures, small but penetrating, in the thin skin of the head. As long as the 'crown of thorns' was on the head, the thorns sealed the tiny wounds (diameter between 1 and 2 millimetres) quite well. The small amount of blood that managed to flow out past the thorns coagulated at once and became encrusted in the hair, and this is the case in all the lesser wounds. But at the back of the head, the image on the Shroud clearly shows many blood trails of a larger size, and streaming in all directions. This blood obviously trickled on to the cloth when the body was laid on the linen only shortly after the thorns had been removed. The blood vessels in the thin skin of the head are numerous but very small, and well supplied with blood as long as the circulatory system remains intact. In a dead person, as soon as the heart stops, the blood is withdrawn from the capillary vessels just under the surface of the skin, turning the skin 'as pale as a corpse', and there is no way any more blood can emerge from such small wounds

because intravascular blood clotting immediately sets in.

On the portrait of Jesus in the Shroud, a large bloodstain on the forehead is visible in the shape of a backwards 3. Such an unusual shape can only be formed if the head is slightly raised from the horizontal (some kind of pillow was most probably placed under the back of his head as he lay on his back). The slowly flowing blood then runs down to a crease in the forehead, collects a little, and as more fresh blood joins it, spills over and down to the next crease in the forehead. This forehead wound, also caused by the crown of thorns, is located on the uppermost point of the entire body (lying flat). Even if it is possible for blood to flow from large wounds on a corpse under certain conditions, it is not possible under any circumstances at the highest part of the forehead. Such bleeding is possible only if the circulatory system is fully operational!

Almost as far from the ground as the forehead are the hands, one placed over the other. Here it is particularly evident how fresh blood has run on to the cloth in addition to blood that had already dried. Three trails of blood can clearly be distinguished on the wrists, running in different directions. Simple measurement of angles provides unambiguous indications of how these blood trails originated. The left hand lies over the right and covers its nail wound, so the calculations only involve the visible wound on the left hand. When the nail was driven through, some blood ran into the furrow between the tensed muscles along the forearm and finally dropped vertically downward, under the influence of gravity. These small, vertical streamlets all run nearly parallel. From their direction we can work out the angle of the arms in relation to the crossbeam of the Cross: it was about 20°. This also makes possible the calculation of the difference in vertical height between the upright and sagging postures of the body on the Cross.

But in relation to the position of the arms there remains one item of great curiosity. Two of the major blood trails confirm the angle of the arms while Jesus was on the Cross, but the third blood trail, from the same point of origin, is distinctly visible on the Shroud at a totally different angle, and has not been mentioned in the studies of any of the better-known Shroud commentators. In fact, they have kept very quiet indeed about it – and no real wonder: the shape and direction of this third blood trail prove that it could only have been formed after the nails were removed from the wounds. The removal of the nails at the wrists made the wounds start bleeding again, and the blood spread across the hand

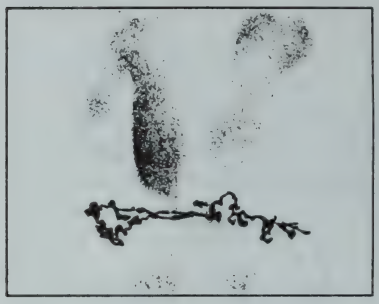


Because the body on the Cross was upright when conscious but sagged when unconscious, two markedly different positions can be mathematically defined by calculation of the angles of the blood trails on hands and arms.

as it lay flat. It is clearly visible in addition that the edges of the third blood trail are much less sharply defined than those of the two other trails, indicating that the first two blood trails had already dried and were moistened again by the aloes in the cloth, whereas the fresh blood of the third trail is surrounded by fringes of watery serum. Such serum fringes are formed by the activity of the clotting factor fibrin present in fresh blood, and appear only when blood collects on a surface that slopes shallowly and cannot flow away freely. As long as Jesus was hanging on the Cross, the blood could flow from the wounds, leaving trails of coagulated blood without any serum fringes and with clearly defined edges.

On the Shroud the right arm appears a little longer than the left. Such minor distortions in the front-view image show that the linen did not lie stiffly across the body. Because the cloth instead conformed to the curved shape of the body, the wound in the side has also left a clear imprint. On the frontal view, next to one of the patches on the burned areas, there are sharply defined trails of blood that stem from the wound in the side, and which coagulated on the Cross.

Parallel with the wound in the side, a conspicuous blood trace runs transversely across the back. The blood has an appearance quite different from the blood on the front of the body. Again there are clear edges of blood surrounded by serum fringes, a sure sign



Blood collected in the lumbar arch between the mid-back and the buttocks. This blood can only have flowed after the body had been laid out horizontally.

that this too was blood that flowed while the body was lying in the cloth. The blood – and there is a considerable quantity of it – can only have flowed on to the cloth when the body was already lying horizontally. A trail of blood would otherwise lead down towards the lower abdomen. This blood certainly comes from the wound in the side. As Jesus lay in the healing cloth, the lateral incision started to bleed again. Naturally, the stream of blood did not run down the length of the body but took the shortest route under gravity to the surface the body was lying on, under the right arm, to collect across the back and in the arch of the lumbar region.

Let us look at what the experts have to say about this. If the arms of the body are raised into the position of the crucifixion, the wound in the side shifts upwards by quite a margin. The scientists at the East Midlands Forensic Laboratory consider it most unlikely, nonetheless, that a spear-thrust at the site of the side wound could have touched the heart. They see no life-threatening danger even if the point penetrated to some depth. The spear would only have pierced the membrane lining the chest cavity, causing 'blood and water' to flow out, a watery pleural fluid that had collected between the lungs and the chest wall during the violent treatment.[31]

On the matter of Jesus' wound in the side, someone once asked Dr W. Bonte, a forensic specialist and Director of the Institute for Forensic Medicine at Dusseldorf University, whether blood could flow from an open wound between the fifth and sixth ribs about 10 centimetres right of centre, from a corpse lying flat on its back, without applying mechanical pressure from outside. The wound had initially been inflicted while the body was upright, and the body was later laid on its back. To ensure a truly unbiased opinion,

the expert was not told which 'criminal case' was involved. The answer given by the forensic expert is extremely informative:

1. Blood flows spontaneously from a wound in a corpse only if
   a) the wound opening is located in an area in which the blood has collected (hypostasis) as may be evident from skin discoloration (livor mortis), or
   b) the wound opening leads to a blood-filled cavity, the blood is still (at least in part) liquid, and the level of the cavity is vertically higher from the ground than the opening of the wound.

2. According to your description, however, the wound opening was situated in the right front thoracic wall, about 10 centimetres to the right of the centre line. With the corpse in a supine position, this corresponds fairly exactly to the highest point of the corpse. So neither of the above conditions is satisfied:
   a) the opening of the wound opening was not in an area of hypostasis, and
   b) blood could not have flowed out through the wound from the right thoracic cavity because it would first have to rise up against the fluid pressure. The same holds for other possible sources of bleeding (lung, lung vessels, heart chambers).

3. I therefore consider a spontaneous postmortal evacuation of blood from a wound aperture in such a location to be out of the question.

4. On the other hand, an outflowing of blood in the quantity you describe, together with the direction of flow, would be in agreement with the supposition that the person concerned was at this time still alive. It is not uncommon to find, in forensic medical practice, that blood flows from a wound opening in precisely the location described here and in the direction of flow you have described, from a victim still living, lying on the back. This is especially true if larger arterial vessels are punctured and if the blood pressure provides the necessary *vis a tergo* [force from beneath] for the blood column to rise against the hydrostatic pressure.[32]

This reply from an expert who was unaware of the delicate subject on whom he was giving his expert opinion is remarkable in many ways. It shows that an unbiased analysis of the facts leads to results quite different from those presented by people who want to

use the Shroud to prove that Jesus died. When Karl Herbst afterwards informed Professor Bonte about the real subject of his expert opinion, and told him of some of his colleagues' arguments, his response was clear: 'I do not wish to revise my earlier reasoning. In my view everything suggests that the circulation had not yet stopped. Of course I concur with Professor Bollone that an emission of blood from a stab wound in the chest can occur during the transport of a corpse in a sort of passive way. But then one would have to ask whether the shroud was wrapped around the body when the transporting began. And if this were the case, no "static" traces and imprint patterns would have been formed, which always allow a direct topographic alignment with a supine body. I would rather have expected numerous traces from brushing contact, arranged in a more random and irregularly scattered manner. To my mind the pattern actually found suggests that the person concerned was wrapped in the cloth only at the entombment, and this most probably by first laying the body flat on the cloth and then placing the other half of the cloth over the body. I cannot see how a passive emission of larger quantities of blood could happen during this operation of laying out the body.'

Severe bleeding is also evident from the wounds caused by the nail through the feet. On the rear image it is clear that the blood from the wound runs down to the heels, collects there and, because fresh blood is still pumping out, flows on to the cloth to the right.

The 17-centimetre-long trail of blood is interrupted because the blood comes up against a fold in the cloth, before flowing further to the right. The last part of this blood trail can be found at the very far end of the Shroud, where one end of the sheet lay over the other so that the fresh blood stained both places. Once more the fact remains: blood simply cannot flow like this from a corpse that has been dead for several hours. The heart and circulatory functions were still intact, although respiration might have been greatly reduced.

The haemorrhaging in the region of the feet shows the flow of fresh blood very clearly. Bodily movements made while laying out the body caused the open wounds to start bleeding again, and the blood spread out in all directions. The dark impression of the blood streamlets leaves no doubt that this blood reached the cloth only after the entombment. Because the fabric was steeped in resinous aloes at the spots where it touched the skin, the blood could not be absorbed into the cloth but spread out across its surface.

The blood traces on the feet show particularly well how the blood spread out in all directions on the surface of the Shroud after the body had been taken down from the Cross.

To establish clinical death presents doctors with difficulties even today. The use of modern drugs, for example, can induce so deep a coma that false diagnoses may easily be made. A well-known method for establishing death used to be to make a small incision in the heel or the wrist. If arterial blood flows, the circulatory system is still operating. Corpses just do not bleed!

In Jesus' case, there were a total of twenty-eight wounds that continued to bleed even after his removal from the Cross. This proves that Jesus could not possibly have been dead when his body was laid in the tomb.

The Open Rock-Tomb

From the moment that Jesus was seen to hang unconscious from the Cross, Joseph made haste to secure the release of the body as soon as was humanly possible. He exerted all his influence on Pilate to obtain an instant release. One scriptural authority even

suggests that the wealthy Joseph paid a high sum in bribery to speed things up.[33] It is by no means inconceivable. Joseph was pressed for time, and any means would have seem justified to him if it would cut short the slow bureaucratic process. The men crucified with Jesus had their legs broken, but in Jesus' case the centurion just checked with his spear-thrust that he was dead. Pilate released the 'corpse', and at once Joseph and Nicodemus took Jesus from the Cross and brought him to the tomb in the rock near by.

In the seclusion of the tomb cavern, preparations for the healing of Jesus got under way on the ledge in the middle of the floor. The opium drink helped him to sleep deeply, out of pain. He was packed around with the vast quantity of medicinal herbs to make his wounds heal faster. But Joseph and Nicodemus knew they could not leave Jesus in the tomb for long. The Jews were extremely suspicious and were already expressing fears that Jesus' followers might steal the body to pretend there had been a miraculous resurrection. According to Matthew (27:62–66), they asked Pilate for someone to guard the tomb. They could not form a watch at the sepulchre themselves because it was the Sabbath. The longer time went on, the more difficult it would become to get Jesus out and away unobserved. It is not possible, at this distance in time, to tell whether a Roman guard was in fact assigned to the tomb, although Matthew (alone) does say so. It may well be, however, that it was introduced into his text to add dramatic effect to the appearance of the angel. The Jews' urgent desire to have a guard set over a corpse must have seemed bizarre to the Romans, and it is very unlikely that they complied with such a request.

So for the Sabbath, at least, the team had the time to take care of Jesus. As soon as he was able, though, he would have to be quickly moved elsewhere, to avoid further problems from the Jewish authorities.

When the women came to the tomb with the oils for anointing, on the first day of the week, they found the stone rolled aside and the tomb empty. Let us see what the Gospel accounts say. Luke writes:

> Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them.
>
> And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre.
>
> And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus.
>
> And it came to pass, as they were much perplexed thereabout,

behold, two men stood by them in shining garments:

And as they were afraid, and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead?

(Luke 24:1–5)

Mark tells it like this:

And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted; Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him.

(Mark 16:4–6)

After his so-called 'resurrection' Jesus is said to be constantly entering through locked doors and appearing to the surprise of his followers (John 20:19–26). So why, it seems pertinent to ask, was the massive stone rolled aside from the tomb entrance, from the very place where this miraculous 'resurrection' was held to have happened? It would surely have been a more astonishing 'miracle' if the stone had had to be rolled aside to let in the women with the oils for anointing, only then for it to be discovered that Jesus had vanished from the sealed chamber. The open tomb is evidence that someone had had to act fast and move Jesus out of the tomb. Essene friends were obviously still at the tomb – Luke's men with the shining garments, Mark's young man with the white garment. The shining white robe certainly implies that they were Essenes. Jesus had probably been led out just a short while earlier. Because the festival of the Passover always coincided with the full moon, it was easy to travel in the bright moonlit night. Perhaps the Essenes who stayed behind were there to collect certain items and seal the tomb. The shocked women received clear replies from the Essenes to their questions: Jesus had risen again and was therefore no longer there. He had indeed arisen – that is, out of his drug-enhanced coma. The Luke text is even clearer: 'Why seek ye the living among the dead?' Does that not compel us to believe that Jesus was alive, that it had been possible to save him? Is this not the clear message we get from these Gospel passages?

John, who does not report the episode with the women at the sepulchre, relates in detail an event which it seems must have taken place before the women arrived (John 20:1–18). Mary Magdalene comes to the tomb early in the morning, when it is still

dark, and sees the stone rolled away. Shocked, she runs to Peter and John, and wails that someone has taken the Lord out of the sepulchre. When the pair arrive at the tomb and peer in, they see only the linen cloths: there is no trace of Jesus anywhere. Mary Magdalene, who stands weeping before the tomb, asks the gardener if he had carried the body away. When the supposed gardener addresses her by name, she realizes it is Jesus.

It is remarkable that Mary Magdalene mistakes Jesus for the gardener. Is this the One resurrected in glory – a figure unrecognized by one of his closest companions and thought by her to be the gardener? What probably happened was that they had only just led Jesus out of the tomb when Mary Magdalene appeared. So as not to attract attention, they had dressed him in simple garments such as a gardener might wear. The weakened Jesus may even have been given a garden implement as a makeshift walking stick to lean on. All of these factors then led to the mix-up. In addition, gardeners have their skin tanned to a darker brown by their constant work out in the sun. The face of Jesus was swollen by the injuries, and the aloes and myrrh solution leaves a characteristic brown coloration. This was surely why Mary Magdalene did not recognize her master in the early twilight, and not because he showed himself in a 'transfigured' body as one resurrected.

The apocryphal *Gospel of Peter* describes how the guard at the tomb saw three men emerge from the tomb 'and two of them supported the other one'! Does a person resurrected in glory need such support? Certainly not – but an injured person who has to be brought to safety, and who has just come round from a coma, does.

After relating these events, the Gospels, in the passages concerning Jesus, become sparser and less reliable, because from here on they are entangled in the myth of the 'resurrection' and in a theological interpretation by which Jesus corresponds to the resurrected Christ. One thing is certain, however: Jesus was with his disciples again for a while, perhaps in Jerusalem, but mainly in Galilee.

Very few precise conclusions can be drawn about the events that took place during the period of time after Jesus' disappearance from the tomb, because the descriptions given are so confused. That there were three days said to have passed between Crucifixion and reappearance corresponds merely to a mystical period that played a role in older resurrection myths. Jesus may well have been looked after for a longer time, until he gradually took to showing himself once more to his followers. In any case,

such meetings seem always to have been of short duration and in secret. He could not show himself publicly, of course, or he would instantly have been arrested again. His appearance seems to have been affected so much by his injuries at first – his face was probably very swollen for a while – that even his friends had difficulty recognizing him when they saw him.

In considering Jesus' appearances to his followers, it is essential always to bear in mind that they are recorded in writing in a way that conforms with the theology of his 'resurrection', as was developed after the event. All of Chapter 21 in the Gospel of John, which contains the appearance of Jesus by the Sea of Tiberias, is the work of an author who did not write the rest, and has simply been tacked on. The chapter seems to have been written by John the priest, and to have been included in the writings of John the favourite disciple on account of their identical names.[34]

Immediately after the Crucifixion, Jesus' disciples left to go back sadly to their former occupations. Simon Peter, Thomas, Nathanael of Cana and the sons of Zebedee resumed fishing (John 21:2). Only when Jesus told them he would meet them himself in Galilee were they fired with fresh enthusiasm (Matthew 28:10).

His encounters with his one-time travelling companions are presented as 'appearances' because Jesus is said to have entered into their midst through locked doors – and yet the physical corporeality of Jesus is emphasized at the same time. The disciples were baffled: most of them had probably not been told about the rescue operation mounted by Joseph and Nicodemus, who did not belong to their circle. The last thing the Gospels report about Jesus, shortly before his departure from Palestine,[35] is his continued endeavour to explain to the disciples once and for all that he had survived the Crucifixion and had recovered. But at first the disciples thought he must be a ghost:

> And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts?
>
> Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have.
>
> And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat?
>
> And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb.
>
> And he took it, and did eat before them.
>
> (Luke 24:38–43)

Jesus is keen to demonstrate to his followers that his body is quite earthly in nature, just as it had been before. He stresses his physical presence by allowing them to touch him, and by eating food, and tells them plainly that he is no ghost. To prove that his body has not been 'transformed' in any way, he also shows the marks of his wounds and even asks 'doubting Thomas' to touch the wound in his side with his hand. Later he revealed himself to the eleven as they were sitting at table, and criticized their lack of faith and their obduracy in not believing those who had seen him after his rising again (!) (Mark 16:14). That Jesus was there in person was the result of no administrative error, no trickery, no illusion; his body is as human as theirs, neither transfigured nor that of an astral projection or a ghost – this is the message he tries to get the disciples to take in.

'Resurrected' or 'Arisen'?

A comparison of the actual vocabulary in the Gospel of John and in the Synoptic Gospels affords a fairly detailed reconstruction of events. On the ledge around the central depression in the floor of the tomb cavern, a number of cloths (*othonia*) made of an undyed (*kathara*) piece of linen (*sindon*) were laid out. Over these cloths another strip of linen (*soudarion*) was spread out. A solution of the medicinal herbs aloes and myrrh was applied to the naked body of the unconscious Jesus, which was then laid on the length of linen. The end of the cloth was lifted and folded back over to cover the body. In this way the whole body was covered (*entylisso*). The quantity of the aromatic substances in the cloth (some 45 kilograms!) made the gigantic poultice-bandaging so heavy that the body was firmly and completely wrapped up (*eneileo*) as if in a hefty quilt.

If we now re-read the passage in John's Gospel that details the events surrounding the discovery of the empty tomb (John 20:1–18), bearing in mind the reconstruction as outlined so far, the full meaning automatically becomes clear.

First Mary Magdalene runs to Simon Peter and the favourite disciple of Jesus and excitedly tells them that someone has removed the body of Jesus from the tomb. What she does not say is that the body has somehow been stolen: her statement is neutral on the subject of how Jesus might have disappeared from the

tomb. We are not even told why Mary Magdalene went to the tomb so early in the morning while it was still dark. John does not say that she wanted to anoint the corpse, as the Synoptic Gospels say was the case with the women they describe. When talking to Peter and John, she simply says, 'They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre . . .' It is as if the people she was talking to knew who 'they' were.

Based on this first sentence, a further reconstruction of events is both possible and plausible. During the night, once the medicinal packing with herbs was in hand, Joseph and Nicodemus visited some of the followers of Jesus. In particular, they approached Mary Magdalene, Simon Peter and John, who could be regarded as intimate companions. They briefly explained to the three what role they themselves had been playing, and that they were trying to save Jesus from death with the aid of Essene friends. Should their efforts be met with success, their amazed listeners could begin to hope again. But whatever happened, Jesus would have to be taken as soon as possible from the present unsafe hiding place, and brought to somewhere secure, away from the watchful eyes of the Jerusalem priesthood. To say any more might be to jeopardize everything. It was possible, after all, that one of the disciples would be arrested and, if tortured, betray their plans.

Mary Magdalene, amazed and overwhelmed at what she has heard, cannot restrain herself for long. She sets off for the tomb to see for herself how true Joseph's words were. There she finds the stone rolled away from the entrance, and runs immediately back to the two others to confirm to them that it had happened. As Joseph had said, 'they' – he and his assistants – had removed Jesus from the tomb. She was quick to add, 'and we know not where they have laid him'. If she had been talking about a grave robbery, this additional remark would have made no sense at all. The victim of a robbery obviously does not expect to know where the stolen goods have been taken. She is evidently referring to the Essenes who, after waiting as long as they could while still under cover of darkness, had taken the first steps to get Jesus away.

Now it was the turn of the two disciples to be utterly amazed, and they make for the tomb at a run. The youthful John is faster and reaches the entrance first, from where he cautiously peers inside. But the ingenuous Peter goes right on into the tomb cavern and looks around. He notices a crumpled heap of cloths and, separate from them, neatly folded, the healing cloth which Joseph had mentioned. Only at this point does John also dare to enter the

tomb, and, as the report says, 'he saw, and believed'.

This most interesting passage is usually taken as the basis for the Christian doctrine of the Resurrection. The action of 'seeing and believing' in this way – an action that occupies an important place in Johannine theology – is commonly interpreted as conferring immediacy and absolute reality on the Resurrection of Jesus. At the same time, according to the Gospel writer, only the favourite disciple 'saw and believed'; Peter merely 'saw'. The next verse provides the solution: 'For as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.'

It is possible to claim that at the time the Gospel of John was being written, the doctrine of the Resurrection, as formulated by Paul (especially in chapter 15 of his first letter to the Corinthians), was already generally accepted by the early Christians. It would have been natural, therefore, that the author of the Gospel, who obtained his facts as (or from) an eyewitness, was concerned about presenting the events in a theologically correct way. So he goes on to forgive Peter for not immediately believing after seeing what he saw, because after all he was not yet aware of the biblical text in which the Resurrection had been foretold.

But we should remember that John's writing is for the most part on two different levels: one obvious and the other cryptic. In this case, then, he is not really talking about the death and resurrection, but about the rescue of Jesus. So let us briefly have a look at that scriptural passage which the disciples did not know about.

It is not easy to identify. Most scriptural authorities agree that according to Acts 2:25–28 it has to be Psalm 16:8–11. Those verses from the Psalm read:

> I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.
>
> Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.
>
> For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.
>
> Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Is this the promised Resurrection, as elucidated by scriptural authority? Try as one may, it is impossible to discern any mention of resurrection here. Quite the contrary. The precondition for resurrection, as Paul stresses, is death. One can use the adjective 'resurrected' only to describe a person who has once died. It is on this

basis that the Christian says in the Creed, Jesus died and then 'rose from the dead'. But the Psalm speaks rather of saving from death. Peter misinterprets it in referring to it while explaining the secret of the Pentecost as the promise of resurrection (Acts 2:25–28). Perhaps this has something to do with his not believing when he saw the linen cloths in the tomb, because he remained loyal to the mythical tradition of the Resurrection. For, taking the facts as they are, the 'seeing and believing' of the favourite disciple can only be understood as his believing what Joseph of Arimathea had told them. The favourite disciple saw that no one was buried in the grave, and the separate cloths confirmed for him the statement that Jesus was still alive. He therefore believed not in the Resurrection but in the rescue of Jesus! That is the key to this Bible passage.

It is possible that the notion of Resurrection in the Bible stems from a tradition aware of these efforts to heal Jesus. The fascinating work of the linguist and theologian Father Günther Schwarz has revealed an exciting new view of the matter. For the terms 'rise' and 'coming back to life' that are found in translations of the Bible, in the original Aramaic derive, as Dr Schwarz proves, from a verbal root meaning 'to resuscitate'![36]

Schwarz explains,

> The linguistic evidence is conclusive: not 'resurrection but 'resuscitation' is the only meaning possible for both these Aramaic words, one of which Jesus would have used. I am referring to the synonymous words *achajuta* and *techijjuta*. Both nouns are derived from the verb *chaja* 'to live', and consequently mean – I repeat – 'resuscitation', and nothing else.[37]

This discovery is quite sensational and at once lends a meaning to the biblical texts that is in perfect agreement with our analysis so far. Even the New Testament Greek word corresponds in its root meaning neither with the original Aramaic concept nor with the meaning of 'resurrection' as established in the Christian usage: *anhistemi* means 'to wake', 'to rouse' (transitive), and 'to get up', 'to come up' (intransitive); *anastasis* means 'a rising up'. Only by the later Christian interpretation is *anhistemi* made to mean 'to raise from the dead' (transitive) and 'to rise from the dead' (intransitive), and *anastasis* 'resurrection'.[38]

In the light of what we now know, let us again consider the passages in Mark and Luke in which the women at the tomb are told about the disappearance of Jesus by the men clad in white. Mark

writes, 'And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen, he is not here: behold the place where they laid him' (16:6, comparable with Matthew 28:6, although there the actual events are given a somewhat dramatized setting involving an angel who performs theatrical magic, an earthquake, and petrified tomb guards). The curt query by the white-robed men in Luke, asking why they seek a living person among the dead (24:5), is as clear as can be. Jesus lives, he is rescued, he has no business with a tomb any more, the living belong among the living. He had gone ahead to Galilee, where his followers could see him again.

We have already seen how Jesus had great difficulty convincing the disciples of his presence in the flesh. The reason for this is twofold. Firstly, the majority of the disciples had not been told about the resuscitation attempt, and so were convinced they were looking at a reanimated corpse or a ghost. And secondly, the supposed death by crucifixion of Jesus marks the point at which history ends and Christian theology (the doctrine of the Resurrection) begins. Jesus' life as a human individual comes to a close at this point, and replacing it, the story of Christ – the mythically glorified Reality – commences.

Chapter Nine

AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION

Paul Meets Jesus at Damascus

After recovering from the ordeal of the Crucifixion, Jesus stayed in hiding. He could no longer teach in public, for his persecutors would soon recognize him and they would not let him escape a second time. He had to get right away from the threat posed by his enemies: 'And he led them out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy' (Luke 24:50–52).

To picture the farewell scene, the best way is to reconstruct the events at the very place where they happened. From outside the city of Jerusalem the path to Bethany climbs quite steeply over the southernmost foothills of the range that includes the Mount of Olives, up to the 'Peak of the Ascension'. A person who walks over the summit and down the other side is quickly lost to sight.

But there is an eyewitness to testify that Jesus did not just disappear once and for all, and whose testimony cannot be dismissed out of hand as a fabrication: it is Paul. Although he was not personally present as a witness at the events after the Crucifixion, he did meet Jesus some time after the 'Ascension' – an encounter that was to change his whole life.

Paulus (Saulus) had been one of the most zealous and fanatical opponents of the New Covenant movement. He may even have heard rumours to the effect that Jesus, although presumed dead, was continuing his activity in hiding. 'And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem' (Acts 9:1–2).

After much intensive research, the psychiatrist Wilhelm Lange-Eichbaum,[1] was able to draw up a detailed portrait of the personality of Paul in his well-known work *Genius, Madness and Fame.* In external appearance, Paul was frail, unprepossessing and shortish, but at the same time his temperament was austere, ascetic, impetuous and impulsive. The zeal he displayed in the persecution of Christians compensated for his own feelings of inadequacy.

Quite the most attractive feature of Paulinism is its notion of redemption and release from inner tensions (particularly sexual needs and the fear of death). Paul had boundless energy and a matching ego. He suffered sorely from blackouts and moods, which he blamed on demons. Recent commentators have shown that the cause of what he often described as a 'thorn in the flesh' (2 Corinthians 12:17, cf Galatians 6:17), was not epilepsy, as formerly suggested, but was probably (and tragically) his own homosexuality. The problem gave him a strong dislike of sex and sexuality altogether, a disposition that was fundamental to his development of an ascetic doctrine of marriage that has turned out to be central to the notions of women and of sexuality that have dominated Christian attitudes from then until now. Jesus, on the other hand, had an open, almost 'modern' attitude towards women. In contrast with the misogynous outlook of contemporary society, he had female disciples and taught women as well as men. Apocryphal tradition says that Mary Magdalene was especially close to him, and was one of his most intimate companions and most faithful followers. The four Gospels of the Bible also report that she was the first person to see Jesus after the Crucifixion. But Paul gives his own list of the people who saw the resurrected Christ: the list contains no mention of Mary Magdalene and includes only men.

The amazing experience that Paul underwent near Damascus was thus no mere vision (nor even a hallucination brought on by an epileptic attack, as often suggested):

> And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven:
>
> And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?
>
> And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks.
>
> And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do.
>
> (Acts 9:3–6)

Now Damascus was in the middle of Syria, where the Jews had been hated since the uprising of the Maccabees (165 BC), and where the spiritual centre of the Essene Order also happened to be at the time. Perhaps Saul had taken part in an initiation ritual, and was 'blinded' for three days (Acts 9:8–9) by the Soma drink.

Sossianus Hierocles was an important Roman official; the governor of Phoenicia, Lebanon, Bithynia and Egypt, he was even in his day considered one of the most brutal persecutors of the early Christian communities. A sentence in his book *To the Christians* runs, 'After fleeing [!] from the Jews, Christ collected as many as nine hundred men all given to robbery.'[2] We have already noted elsewhere what kind of people such terms as 'bandits' and 'robbers' were usually applied to by Latin speakers. It is quite possible that the Essene community in Damascus had nine hundred members.

Paul was baptised and introduced to the teachings by Ananias, a follower of Jesus living in Damascus. According to Acts 9, Ananias was asked by Jesus himself to visit Saul, but he was at first very reluctant because he knew of the persecutor's record to date. Jesus dismissed this objection with the words: 'Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake' (Acts 9:15–16).

Henceforward Paul would be the most zealous proclaimer of the new faith. He felt the fascination of Jesus' personality, and at once recognized the wider significance of the task that the Nazarene had given him. With even greater zeal than in his persecution of Jesus and his followers, Paul took on the task of spreading his own interpretation of the new teaching. The encounter between Jesus and Paul in Damascus took place around two years after the Crucifixion. No less than 300 kilometres north of Jerusalem, Jesus must have felt relatively safe from his enemies in the care of the Essenes.

The Journey to Paradise

Provided a religious community accepted the Roman state cult, Rome tolerated the exercise of other religious practices. But the Jews had special privileges, and were exempt even from having to participate in the state cult. The first expansion of the New

Covenant took place under the protection of the Jewish exemption regulations. But when it became clear to the Romans that the followers of Jesus had little connection with Judaism, and might in addition be numbered among political agitators, the Christians (as they became known collectively) forfeited all claims to tolerance, and hostility was openly manifested instead. At first, the Christian communities were persecuted by the Roman state system at the local level only, as alleged disturbers of the peace. A state-controlled general persecution was not to start until the second half of the third century.

Immediately after the Crucifixion, the animosity of the Jews in Jerusalem forced the first Christians to expand their universal mission to address the much wider territory of the Roman Empire.

In Damascus, then, Jesus could enjoy the benefit of Essene protection. About five kilometres outside Damascus there is a place that is still called Mayuam-i-Isa, 'The place where Jesus lived'. The Persian historian Mir Kawand cites several sources which state that Jesus lived and taught here after the Crucifixion.

The followers of the 'new teaching' continued to grow in number, not least because of Jesus' own personal efforts. But rumours of Jesus' presence in Damascus – rumours that Paul had actually travelled to investigate, after all – would have become more and more substantial, and it must gradually have become too dangerous for the Nazarene to continue to reside in the Roman province of Syria.

Persian traditions tell how, while Jesus was staying in Damascus, he received a letter from the King of Nisibis in Asia Minor, in which the king asked Jesus to come to cure him of an illness. Jesus then sent his close disciple Thomas on ahead, with the message that he himself would soon follow. And shortly after, he travelled to Nisibis with his mother Mary. In *Jami-ut-Tawarik*, the Persian scholar Fakir Muhammad says that the king had already been healed by Thomas before Jesus arrived in Nisibis with his group. Imam Abu Jafar Muhammad wrote in his famous work *Tafsir-Ibn-i-Jarir at-Tabri* that Jesus' stay in Nisibis came to represent a considerable danger to the Nazarene, and that it was at the risk of his life that he appeared in public.[3]

From Nisibis, Jesus first went north-west. At any rate, the apocryphal *Acts of Thomas* relate that Jesus visited the court of the King of Andrapa, where he suddenly appeared during the festivities at the princess' wedding. Andrapolis was in Paphlagonia (modern Iskilip, in the extreme north of Anatolia), and had belonged to the

Roman province of Galatia since 7 BC. The wedding festivities at the royal court were the scene of a reunion for the apostle Thomas and his master, for they had apparently travelled there separately.

Thomas was commissioned by Jesus to go to India.

> But he did not want to go there, and said he could not travel because of weakness of the flesh. 'How can I, a Hebrew, travel and preach the truth to the people of India?' And as he reflected and spoke thus, the Saviour appeared to him in the night and spoke to him: 'Do not be afraid, Thomas. Go to India and preach the word there, for my Grace is with you.' But he would not obey, and said: 'Send me anywhere you want, but somewhere else! For I shall not go to India.'
>
> (*Acta Thomae* I)[4]

According to the *Acts of Thomas*, Jesus thereupon sold the reluctant Thomas as a slave to the Indian merchant Abban, who had been asked by King Gundafor (Gondaphares) to find him a carpenter. (Discoveries of ancient coin hoards have confirmed that the Indo-Parthian King Gundafor was indeed on the throne during the first century.) Jesus signed a contract with Abban, 'settled for a sum of three pounds of unstamped silver'. This unusual story presumably indicates that Thomas' fare to India was paid by Jesus, and that in this way Jesus was making sure that Thomas would get there.

Like the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*, the *Acts of Thomas* are of Syrian origin, and can be traced back in tradition to the missionary activity of Thomas himself in Edessa. Tradition furthermore has it that during the fourth century, long after the apostle had died near Madras in southern India, his remains were brought back to Edessa. The *Acts of Thomas* and the *Gospel of Thomas* are closely related. Both are esoteric works of the Gnostics written in Syrian Aramaic (Syriac), and used at the beginning of the third century by the late-Gnostic Manicheans (Mani was born in 217). A 'Gospel of Thomas' is first mentioned and quoted by Hippolytus (Ref. V 7,20) in his report on the 'Naassenes' in about AD 230.

The name of the apostle Didymus Judas Thomas means 'Judas the Twin' (Greek *didymus* and Aramaic *toma'* both mean 'twin'), and it may well indicate a particularly close relationship with Jesus. In Coptic texts, the word 'twin' seems to be replaceable by (and therefore synonymous with) the expression 'friend and companion'. The *Acts of Thomas* state that Thomas was afforded the privilege of being let into Jesus' deepest secrets. In Chapter 39, the apostle is addressed with his special title, 'Twin brother of Christ, apostle of the Highest, and initiate, sharer in the knowledge of the

hidden word of Christ, thou who receivest his secret pronouncements'. And in another version: 'You who have had knowledge of the secret Word of the Giver of Life, and who have received the hidden Mysteries of the Son of God'.[5] Thomas is thus the keeper (the root meaning of 'Nazarene') of the secret words of Jesus revealed uniquely to him.

In the *Gospel of Thomas* (in the Coptic Gnostic texts of Nag Hammadi), there is the following passage:

> Jesus said to his disciples, 'Compare me to someone and tell Me whom I am like.' Simon Peter said to Him, 'You are like a righteous messenger.' Matthew said to Him, 'You are like a man who is a wise philosopher.' Thomas said to Him, 'Master, my mouth is wholly incapable of saying whom You are like.' Jesus said, 'I am not your master. Because you have drunk, you have become intoxicated from the bubbling spring which I have given.' And He took him and withdrew and told him three words. When Thomas returned to his companions, they asked him, 'What did Jesus say to you?' Thomas said to them, 'If I tell you one of the things which he told me, you will pick up stones and throw them at me, and a fire will come out of the stones and burn you up.'
>
> (Logion 13)[6]

Thomas had evidently penetrated to the deeper dimensions of knowledge, and now seemed to be almost an equal of Christ.

Conversions effected by the apostles play a great role in the *Acts of Thomas*. There are many descriptions of rites of initiation that include sacramental elements. The new convert was 'sealed' by anointment with oil, and by participation in the Eucharist. Only bread was consumed at this Mass or Eucharist (or Holy Communion), for the chalice was only used to contain water. In the second part of the *Acts of Thomas*, the Indian king Misdai says that oil, water and bread were elements in the apostles' 'magic'. The initiate was called a servant or handmaid of God, was said to share in the Power of God, and was thereafter considered a member of the fold. Becoming the 'servant' or 'handmaid' 'in the power of' God explains how it came about that Thomas was 'sold as a slave' to someone called Abban (*Abba*, 'Father').

Elevation from ordinary Brother of the Essene Order to a higher Nazarene was sealed by anointment of the head with consecrated oil, and further anointing the naked initiate.

The Nazarenes must have looked very similar to one another. They were all clothed in the same white robes , and all wore their hair and beards in the same style. So it is possible that the term

'twin', when applied to Thomas, was simply an allusion to the similarity in outward appearance between the two men. Accounts of mistaken identity in the *Acts of Thomas* read like a comedy of errors, although Thomas was a good ten years younger than Jesus.

On the same wedding night, the King of Andrapa showed the apostle Thomas into the bridal chamber, so that he might convert the newly wedded couple. After Thomas had prayed with the couple, everyone else left the room.

> But after everyone had left and the doors had been closed, the bridegroom raised the curtain of the bridal chamber to call his bride. And he saw the Lord Jesus speaking with the bride, resembling Judas Thomas, who had just blessed them and left them. The groom said to Jesus: 'Did you not just leave? How did you get back in?' But the Lord replied: 'I am not Judas surnamed Thomas; I am his brother.' And the Lord sat down upon the bed, asking them to sit down on couches, and proceeded to tell them: 'Remember, my children, what my brother said to you and to whom he commended you . . .
>
> (*Actae Thomae* 11–12)[7]

An earlier chapter (Chapter 8) describes the meeting between Thomas and a Hebrew woman who played the flute at the wedding festivities. Since the fall of the kingdom of Israel (722 BC) there had probably been Israelite communities scattered throughout the Middle East. It is likely that as he travelled ever eastwards, Jesus was always able to find a welcome among the far-flung Children of Israel, or at least with sympathizers of the Israelites. In Parthia (modern Iraq and Iran) there were major Israelite settlements, according to the Book of Esther. The Israelite communities later formed an alliance to put up strong resistance to the Emperor Trajan's invasion (around AD 115).

Many of the place-names along the old Silk Route suggest a connection with Jesus or Mary, especially as stopover stations. Near Ephesus, on the west coast of what is now Turkey, for instance, stands a 'House of Mary'. Perhaps Jesus and his mother sojourned there before continuing their journey eastwards.

A number of historical documents refer to Jesus' stay in Persia. The name and title of Jesus vary from country to country, and are constantly adapted from language to language, according to local conditions and traditions. In places where Jesus stayed for a longer period, local names are more likely to have been preserved over the years. After all, it seems that more than sixteen years elapsed after Jesus' Crucifixion before he arrived in Kashmir with his entourage.

In Parthia, Jesus was evidently known by the name Yuz Asaf. The meaning of the name is given in the *Farhang-i-Asafia*, an ancient work recounting the history of Persia, which relates that Jesus (*Hazrat Issa*[8]) healed some lepers, who were thereafter called *Asaf* – 'the purified' – having been cured of their complaint. *Yuz* means 'leader', so Yuz Asaf can be taken to mean 'leader of the healed', a common epithet for Jesus, and probably alluding to Jesus' mission to cleanse 'impure spirits', and lead all back to the true Faith. Jesus would probably be able to move with greater safety and evade his persecutors more easily under this new name – after all, the Persian priests were not likely to have forgotten his earlier visit to their land.

According to the traditions, the prophet entered the land from the west. His words and teachings in content no different from those of Jesus Christ, he is also said to have resided in Mashag, where he visited the grave of Shem the son of Noah (*Jami-ut-Tawarik*, Vol. II). Various manuscripts have been preserved which tell how Yuz Asaf preached all over Persia (modern Iran), and converted a large number of people. Details of his teaching (such as Agha Mustafai's *Ahwali Ahaliau-i-Paras*) confirm again and again that Yuz Asaf and Jesus were one and the same man.

The official poet at the court of Akbar, the Moghul Emperor of India, called Jesus *Ai Ki Nam-i-to Yus o Kristo*, or 'Thou, whose name is Yuz or Christ'. Although the Greek title *Christos* has assumed various derivative forms that have become established in various languages of the West, in the East it is the name Yuz Asaf that has been preserved down the centuries.

Place-names which apparently commemorate the presence and activity of Jesus are also to be found in modern Afghanistan and Pakistan. For example, there are two plains that bear the name of the prophet Yuz Asaf in eastern Afghanistan, near the towns of Ghazni and Jalalabad, to which tradition says Jesus once went.

Then there is the presence of Jesus and Thomas in Taxila (now in Pakistan) at the court of King Gundafor during the twenty-sixth year of his reign (AD 47), as recorded in the *Acts of Thomas*. Thomas is asked by the king to build a magnificent palace, but the apostle instead distributes the money meant to pay for it among the needy. Thomas thanks Jesus for this opportunity to render service:

> 'I thank thee, O Lord, in every way that I can, you who died for a short while [!] that I might live eternally in You; and for your selling me, in order to liberate many others through me.' And he never ceased to

> teach and give relief to the troubled, saying, 'The Lord gives this to you, and ensures that everyone receives nourishment. For he is the nourisher of orphans and the provider for widows, and offers the gift of tranquillity and peace to all who are troubled.'
>
> (*Actae Thomae* 19)[9]

Eventually, the king himself was converted, to mark the event receiving a 'palace in heaven'! Thomas initiated Gundafor and his brother Gad, 'sealed' them by baptism with water, by anointing with oil, and by celebrating the Eucharist, and so brought them as sheep into the fold of the Lord. 'For we have heard said that the God that you worship recognizes his sheep by his seal.' At the conclusion of the initiation rite, Jesus himself appeared, and said, 'Peace be with you, Brothers' (*Actae Thomae* 27)[10]

The text continues, 'And [Thomas] . . . took bread, oil, vegetables and salt, blessed them, and gave them to the assembly. He himself continued his fast, however, for the Day of the Lord was dawning.'

Jesus apparently did not reside continuously at the court of the king, although he returned there regularly. At any rate, the following night he again visited Thomas, who was expecting him, and told him:

> Thomas, rise early, bless everyone, and after prayer and worship, go along the path east for two miles, and there I shall show you my glory. Through the work that you are about to begin, many will come to seek refuge in me, and you will triumph over the world and the power of the enemy.
>
> (*Actae Thomae* 29)[11]

At the place described by Jesus, the apostle found a young boy who seemed to be dead. He brought him back to life, in the presence of a number of spectators. The youth, who is described as 'comely', told Thomas that he had seen Jesus: 'For I saw that man, as he stood next to you, and I heard what he said to you: "I have many miracles to perform through you, and there are great works that I shall accomplish through you . . . "'[12]

The next clue to the road taken by Jesus on the way east is located in a small town called Mari, 70 kilometres east of Taxila. In this idyllically situated mountain resort (formerly spelled Murree on English maps) on the border with Kashmir, a grave has been maintained and honoured from as far back as anyone can remember, and is known as Mai Mari da Asthan, the 'Final Resting-Place of Mother Mary'.

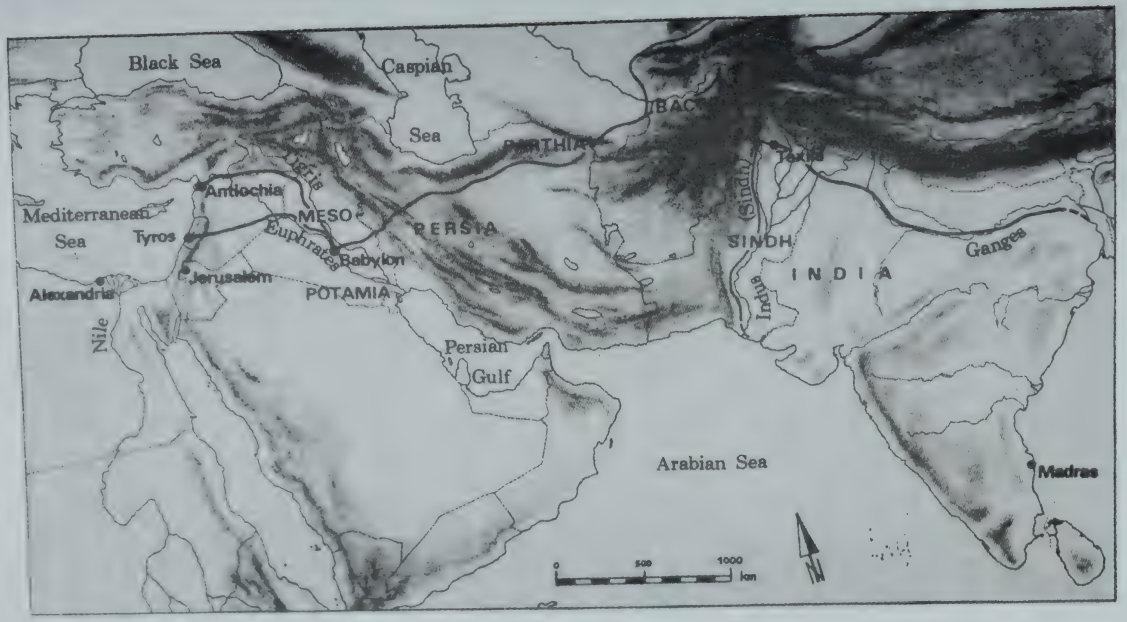
When Jesus reached this area with his group, his mother would have been over seventy years old, and no doubt tired after the long journey. Because there is no evidence of a tomb of Mary anywhere else, it is quite conceivable that Mary was buried here. Jesus would certainly not have gone on without her otherwise, leaving her behind unprotected and at the mercy of his enemies. Like many graves in the Kashmir region, this tomb is aligned in an east-west orientation, whereas in areas of Islamic culture the graves are always oriented north-south. The tomb of Mary is located on Pindi Point, a mountain outside the small town, and is revered by the Islamic population as the tomb of the mother of Jesus. (By Muslims, Jesus, or Issa, is revered as one of the greatest prophets.) Today the site belongs to a military exclusion zone becaue of its proximity to the ceasefire line.

The area around Mari was Hindu at the time of Christ. But the Hindus normally cremate their dead and scatter the ashes; only monks (*sadhus*) and saints are interred. Because the grave dates from pre-Islamic (therefore Hindu) times, the person buried there must have been regarded as a saint.

When the Islamic hordes pressed through to northern India in the eighth century and part of the native population was converted, the conquerors destroyed many of the places of worship of the 'infidels'. The shrine of Mary's tomb, however, was left unharmed, presumably because the Muslims were able to recognize from the special position of the grave that it was a shrine of one of the 'Peoples of the Book' – the Christians or the Jews – whom they respected (Plate 39).

In 1898, the British army built a watchtower right next to the monument, but this did not deter the many pilgrims from visiting the sacred shrine. Then in 1917, the order went out from one Captain Richardson to raze the tomb to the ground in order to keep the pilgrims away from the military zone. Loud cries of protest from the population prompted local officials to intervene, and destruction of the shrine was halted before it could be completed. The struggle over the Tomb of Mary is all on record in the archives of the local administration, filed under the date 30 July 1917. The tomb was restored in 1950, soon after which the watchtower was removed. Today the tomb is 'decorated' with the mast of a television transmitter.

An asphalt road now runs from Mari, through wooded mountain scenery, to Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, 170 kilometres away. About 40 kilometres south of Srinagar, between the villages



The Route Jesus took to India.

of Naugam and Nilmag, in a broad open valley, lies the Yus-Marg, the 'Meadow of Jesus', where Jesus preached – or so it is stated in the tradition of the shepherd tribes known as the Bani-Israel, the 'Children of Israel', who are said to have settled in the area from 722 BC.

The *Acts of Thomas* go on to tell how the apostle Thomas lived for a while as a missionary at the court of the Indian King Misdai in southern India, where he again won many followers and converted a great number of people. Eventually he fell into disfavour, however, and met the fate of a martyr. When Marco Polo returned to Europe in 1295 from his twenty-five-year stay in the Far East, he brought news of the masses of Christians living on the east coast of southern India, who worshipped the tomb of the apostle Thomas, and who used a red earth tinted by the martyr's blood to perform faith healings. The great Venetian traveller also found Christians on the Malabar coast on the west side of southern India (now Kerala), who called themselves 'Thomas Christians'. Their form of Christianity 'could be traced back a long way', Marco Polo noted.

But there are much earlier documents which bear witness to the presence of Christians in India.[13] Tertullian lists India among those lands 'ruled' by Christianity. Ephraem Syrus (or Ephraim of Syria, about AD 306–373) tells of the missionary activity of Thomas in India, and Anorbius (around AD 305) also counts India among the Christian countries. And one of the dignitaries attending the Council of Nicea bore the title Bishop of all Persia and Greater India.

The tomb of the apostle Thomas is revered by Christians to this day in the southern Indian town of Mylapore near Madras, even though his bones are said to have been taken from there to Edessa long since, at the beginning of the fourth century.

In the year 1900, a short article appeared in an English journal which attracted the attention of the entire theological world. The report announced that among the ruins of the Indian city of Fatehpur Sikri (not far from Agra, some 175 kilometres south of Delhi), a saying of Jesus that was completely unknown in the Christian West had been found engraved on a wall. Fatehpur Sikri was for a brief period the capital of the Moghul Empire in India under the Great Moghul Akbar (1542–1605), only to be abandoned a few years after it was built. The Great Moghul made a triumphal entry into the city in May 1601, and to commemorate the event he had the aforesaid inscription carved on the southern main gate (Buland Darwaza) of the grand mosque. Almost twenty years ear-

lier, in 1582, Akbar had proclaimed a rational monotheism (Din-i-Ilahi) in an attempt to combine the many religions of India. He had made a thorough study of Hinduism, Parseeism and Jainism, and he learned all he could about the Christian Gospels from Portuguese Jesuits who lived at his court. His plan was to unite India, which at the time was split into religious factions, with a single religion to be based on the essential tenets of all the teachings. Akbar must have selected this particular saying of Jesus because it seemed to him to be the best possible formulation of his ideas, or he would hardly have given the quotation such precedence.

The words are inscribed on the left side of the enormous archway, as one leaves the precincts of the mosque via the main gate, along with a reference to the occasion it commemorated and the date:

> Jesus (peace be with him) said: 'The world is a bridge. Pass over it – but do not settle down on it!'

In another place, above the archway of the north wing of the mosque (Liwan), the same saying is found in a modified form, 'Jesus (peace be with him) said: "The world is an over-proud house. Take this as a warning, and do not build on it!"'

The Portugese missionaries could not possibly have told Akbar of this *agraphon* (Greek 'unwritten': the technical term for a saying of Jesus not contained in the Gospels) for the saying is not to be found in any Christian text. Nor is it included in the very extensive *Life of Jesus* that the Jesuit Jerome Xavier wrote for Akbar. So it is quite possible that the agraphon really does derive from the early Thomas Christians. The initial words of the sayings, an introductory phrase that is always the same, is also found in the later Islamic accounts of Jesus, which has led most Orientalists to infer that the saying came to India via Islam. But this need not be the case, for there is conspicuous agreement between these sayings and the far earlier sayings of Jesus in the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*, both in form and in content. The *Gospel of Thomas* is now accessible in its entirety thanks to the sensational finds at Nag Hammadi in 1945. The 'Gospel' is not a coherent narrative like the biblical Gospels, but a collection of 114 sayings of Jesus (Logia), in an arbitrary order. Most of the Logia are introduced with the same formula, 'Jesus said . . . .

The *Gospel of Thomas* opens by saying what it is: 'These are the secret words that Jesus spoke while he was alive, and that Didymus Judas Thomas wrote down. And he [Jesus] said,

"Whoever comes to understand these sayings will not taste death."'[14]

Even if it were not possible to prove that the apostle Thomas visited India, there is considerable evidence of missionary activity throughout India long before the Muhammadan conquest. Pantainos of Alexandria is said to have stumbled on Matthew's Gospel in Aramaic while on his missionary travels in India in about AD 180.

The *Chronicle of Seert* (I section 8, para 5) relates that Bishop David of Basra (a contemporary of Metropolitan Papa who died in AD 316) went to India and preached there with great success.

In about the year 335 (as reported later by Philostorgios, before AD 433), the Emperor Constantine sent Bishop Theophilus to India to reform the liturgy and ritual worship of the Church there.

At the end of the fourth century, Symeon of Mesopotamia mentions the martyrdom of Indian 'barbarians' for their Christian faith.

In about AD 490, Bishop Ma'an of Persia sent his writings to India (according to the *Chronicle of Seert*, II section 9).

And finally, Cosmas Indicopleustes has left us a record of a journey to India that he undertook in around AD 525, giving precise geographical details. He found Christians on the island of Sri Lanka, and on the Indian west coast, 'in Male, where the pepper grows [that is, Malabar], and in the place called Kalliana [Kalyan, near Bombay]', and he states that Kalliana was the seat of a bishop who had been to Persia.[15]

Although it is evident that Jesus was known in India long before the arrival of Islam, statements about him in the Koran are revealing. The Koran says that Jesus did not die on the Cross, but survived the attempted execution and then lived in a 'happy valley'.

The 'True' Jesus in Islam

Issa, the name commonly used for Jesus in Islam, derives from the Syriac *Yeshu*. The reason that the accounts of the prophet Issa in the Koran are so extensive is probably to correct the 'distorted and twisted image in the writings of his followers'. Jesus is thought of as the last great prophet before Muhammad. He is even said to have prophesied the coming of the 'greatest of all prophets':

> I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.
>
> He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you.
>
> (John 16:12–14)

Muhammad considered himself to be the promised 'Spirit of truth', and therefore felt that he was called upon to re-interpret the teaching of Jesus, and to rehabilitate the man after his supposed shameful death on the Cross. After being relieved of the humiliation of death by crucifixion, Jesus was welcomed into the Islamic fold as the one preparing the way for Muhammad. At the same time, 'The Messiah, the son of Mary, was a Messenger; other Messengers [like him] had gone before' (Koran 5,76).

About Jesus' mission, the Koran says: 'And verily, to Moses We [that is, God] gave the Book and we sent other Messengers in his footsteps, and we gave Jesus, the son of Mary, visible signs, and strengthened him with the Spirit of Holiness' (Koran 2,88).

The Koran clearly rejects the assertion of Christian theology that Jesus is man and God:

> People of the Book, do not transgress the bounds of your religion. Speak nothing but the truth about Allah. Truly the Messiah, Jesus the son of Mary, was only a Messenger of God and [a fulfilment of] his Word which he sent down to Mary, and a gift of Grace from him. So believe in God and his Messengers, and do not say: [there are] 'Three'. Forbear, and it shall be better for you. Truly, God is one God alone. It is far from his holiness that he should have a son!
>
> (Koran 4,172)

And in another place,

> . . . They imitate the infidels of old. God confound them! How they are led astray! They worship their rabbis and their monks as gods besides God, and the Messiah the son of Mary. And yet they were ordered to serve the one God only. There is no God but him. Exalted be He above those whom they deify beside Him!
>
> (Koran 9,30–31)

The Koran clearly states that Jesus did not die on the Cross, and that the Jews were deceived:

> They denied the truth, and uttered a monstrous falsehood against Mary. They declared, 'We have put to death the Messiah Jesus the son

> of Mary, the Messenger of God.' They did not kill him, nor did they crucify him, but he was made to appear [as one crucified] to them. Those that disagreed about him were in doubt about his death; what they knew about it was sheer conjecture. . . . In reality, God lifted him up to His presence; He is mighty and wise.
>
> (Koran 4,156–157)

The Arabic word for 'crucify' here clearly denotes 'put to death by crucifixion'. But this passage shows that in the Koran a crucifixion without the death of the one crucified is not out of the question. What is more, at the time the Koran was written the Jews themselves seem to have been in doubt about whether Jesus really died on the Cross.

The Koran also does not neglect to provide an answer to the question of where Jesus went after the Crucifixion: 'We made the son of Mary and his mother a sign to mankind and gave them a shelter on a peaceful hillside watered by a fresh spring' (Koran 23,51). How well this description of the place of refuge applies to Kashmir is absolutely astonishing. In another translation, the place in the mountains is even called 'a green valley'.

According to Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (founder of the Islamic Ahmadiya reform movement, born in Qadian, Punjab, in 1835) the Koran confirms the truth that Jesus was saved from death on the Cross, and so from an accursed death that would have been unworthy of him.

One or two passages of the Gospels seem also to confirm Jesus' survival of the Crucifixion. Jesus made a statement comparing himself to Jonah, who had survived being ingested into the belly of a whale and had then reappeared. If Jesus had been lying dead in his sepulchre, there would be no parallels to be drawn between the two. 'For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth' (Matthew 12:40).

For the Ahmadiya sect (still a popular form of Islam today), Jesus' overcoming of the torment of crucifixion is a fulfilment of prophecies in the Old Testament. Isaiah's 'righteous servant', for example, 'was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. . . . Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, . . . he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand' (Isaiah 53:8, 10). 'Cut off out of the land of the living' and some other references to what might be taken for death notwithstanding, the Book of the prophet Isaiah

nowhere says that the promised servant of the Lord actually dies.

Even the prophecies of Psalm 34 say nothing about a death of the future Messiah: 'Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the Lord delivereth him out of them all' (Psalms 34:19). So God can hardly have planned for Jesus to die the shameful death of crucifixion. From the traditional viewpoint of the Arab, a man is only accursed if he turns away from God in his heart, 'becomes black', has no love for God, is robbed of God's mercy for all time, and is void of all knowledge of God; if he, like Satan, is full of the poison of deceit, and is no longer reached by a single ray of the light of love; and if he rejects all relations with God, and is full of resentment, hate and enmity towards God, so that God becomes his enemy and turns from him in disgust! Mirza Ghulam believed that Christians could not ever have been made fully aware of the horror and shame attached to the description 'accursed on the wood', or they would never have made death on the Cross such a feature of their worship of the virtuous Jesus.

Some modern specialists in Eastern philosophies are of the opinion that the truth about Jesus and his teaching has, in some ways, actually been better preserved in Islam than in Christianity. Arabia, they say, became Christian at the time. The Christian Muhammad attempted through his message to protect the original teaching of Jesus against the proliferating distortions, but his message too was distorted after his death just as the teaching of Jesus had been earlier.[16]

Jesus in Kashmir

If Jesus really did live in Kashmir for a considerable length of time – if, in other words, tradition is right in averring that he eventually died in Srinagar when he was over 80 years old – then it should be possible to find some evidence in ancient Indian literature of how he spent the last thirty to forty years of his life.

The trouble is, writers in India in those ancient days refused to allow foreign influences to impinge upon their own culture, even in referring to historical events. One example of this is the complete absence of contemporarily written records or descriptions even of Alexander the Great's imposing military incursion into India. Specialists in Indian history are agreed that there was no systematic written history in India before the spread of Islam.[17]

The ancient narratives of the Hindus are called the Puranas (Sanskrit, *purana* 'old'). From the fifth or fourth century BC until the seventeenth century AD they have been constantly extended by the addition of further 'stories'.[18] The entire collection currently runs to eighteen volumes, all written in Sanskrit, the old sacred language of India. The ninth volume, called the *Bhavishyat Maha-Purana* and written between the third and the seventh centuries AD, contains a supplement that describes how Jesus came to India. The description is so clear that there can be no doubt about who its subject is.

The Purana reports that Israelites came to live in India, and then, in verses 17–32, describes Jesus' appearance on the scene:

> Shalivahana, the grandson of Vikramajit, came to power. He vanquished the attacking hordes of Chinese, Parthians, Scythians and Bactrians. He drew a border between the Aryans and the Mleccha (the non-Hindus), and ordered the latter to withdraw to the other side of the Indus. One day, Shalivahana, the lord of the Shakas, came to a snowy mountain. There, in the Land of the Huna, the powerful king saw a handsome man seated on the mountain. He had a white body, and he wore white garments.
>
> The king asked the holy man, 'Who are you?'
>
> The other replied: 'Know that I am Ishaputra [Sanskrit, 'Son of God'], born of a virgin, proclaimer of the teachings of the barbarians [*Mleccha*], which bear the truth.'
>
> The king then asked him, 'What teachings do you mean?'
>
> The other replied, 'At the end of the Satya Yuga,[19] the Golden Age, I appeared as Masiha [the Messiah] in the depraved land of the unbelievers. The goddess Ishamasi also appeared before the barbarians [*Dasyu*] in a terrible form. I was brought before her in the manner of the unbelievers and attained the Masiha-tva [Messiah-hood]. Hear, O king: I brought the religion unto the unbelievers. After the purification of the spirit and the cleansing of the impure body, and after seeking refuge in the prayers of the *Naigama*, man will come to worship the Eternal. Through truth, meditation and recollection of spirit, man will find his way to Isha [Sanskrit, 'God'], who dwells in the centre of Light, who remains as constant as the sun, and who dissolves all transient things for ever. Thus was Ishamasi destroyed, and the Form of Isha was revealed in the heart, ever pure and bestowing happiness; and I was called Isha-Masiha.'
>
> After the king heard these words, he bowed before the teacher of the barbarians and sent him on his way to their terrible land.[20]

The 'teacher of the unbelievers' refers to himself as Isha-Masiha.

The Sanskrit word *Isha* means 'Lord' and is used for 'God'. *Masiha* corresponds to the word 'Messiah'. Thus *Isha-Masiha* means 'the Lord, the Messiah'. Elsewhere the white-robed man calls himself Isha-putra, 'Son of God', and says that he was born of a virgin (Sanskrit *kumari*). Because there is no comparable legend to be found before this in Indian literature, the person described has to be Jesus. The 'goddess Ishamasi' appears to be a general expression for everything evil and wicked: the name is not found anywhere else in the literature. The word *Naigama* is evidently the name of some holy scripture(s), but there are no references to it/them anywhere else either. Some translators assume that it refers to the Vedas.

According to Professor Hassnain, King Shalivahana ruled in the Kushan period from AD 49 to 50. Other commentators put the start of the Shaka or Shalivahana era at AD 78.

The only 'snowy mountains' in India are in the Himalayan ranges. Scholars have not yet been able to locate the 'land of the Huna' precisely, but it must be a region of the western Himalaya, somewhere between the foothills in the Punjab and Kailash mountain in western Tibet near the Indian border; this vast area also includes Ladakh.

Further evidence that Jesus visited the Himalayan area is provided by a grave mentioned by the painter Nicholas Roerich in *The Heart of Asia*, published in 1930. The grave lies to the north of Ladakh in neighbouring East Turkestan, now the Chinese province of Sinkiang (Xinjiang), nearly 10 kilometres from the town of Kashgar, and is said to be that of a certain Mary who was among Jesus' following. The apocryphal *Gospel of Philip* mentions three women who did not leave Jesus' side after the Crucifixion. All three were called Mary: his mother, her sister (the wife of Cleopas, perhaps?), and Mary Magdalene 'who was called his companion'. The notion that this grave near Kashgar is of (one or other) Mary could very well thus be based on fact.

During the latter years of his life in India, Jesus would not have remained at the same place but would have moved from place to place as an itinerant minister for as long as his health permitted. There are, however, many indications that he always came back to Kashmir.

About 60 kilometres south-east of Srinagar and only 12 kilometres from Bijbihara (the place of the 'Stone of Moses') is Aish-Muqam, a cave extending some twelve metres into the

mountainside, at the entrance to which a magnificent shrine has been erected. The sacred building contains the reliquary of Zainuddin Wali, an Islamic saint, who lived in the cave during the rule of Sultan Zainul Abidin Badshah (1408–61).

The most prized possession of this saint was a staff that had been given to him by Sheikh Noor Din Wali. The staff is still there, considered to be a most valuable relic, and is closely watched over by the tomb attendants, who always keep it covered with a green cloth. When the faithful of the region perceive themselves to be under threat from some emergency, especially an epidemic, they make a pilgrimage to Aish-Muqam confident of being helped by the miraculous power of the staff. The dark brown staff is over 2.3 metres long, and 25 millimetres thick; it is made of olive wood, and is known either as the 'Rod of Moses' or as the 'Rod of Jesus'. Those who reverence this relic believe that that the traveller's staff first belonged to Moses, who used it when he made his way to Kashmir, and was later used by Jesus as a symbol of his Mosaic heritage. The staff was formerly kept in the Khangahi Muhalla quarter of Srinagar, before it found a worthy site in Aish-Muqam.

The name *Aish-Muqam* is said to refer to Jesus. *Aish* is said to derive from Isha or Issa, and *muqam* means 'place of rest (or repose)'. This rather suggests that the isolated cave might once have served as a place where Jesus could withdraw for a while to devote himself to quiet meditation. There is, of course, no longer anything to prove the truth of such traditions.

But there is evidence for the presence of Jesus in Kashmir that is much more solid than mere oral traditions: testimonies in stone which have survived the vicissitudes of the centuries, more or less intact, as archaeological treasures. One such lapidary piece of testimony to the presence of Jesus in Kashmir is an inscription on the Takht-i-Suleiman, the 'Throne of Solomon', the history of which is recounted by Mullah Nadiri, a historian who lived during the rule of Sultan Zainul Abidin. In his *History of Kashmir* (*Tarikh-i-Kashmir*), written in 1413, he reports that the Temple of Solomon (which was already a thousand years old at the dawn of the Christian era) was restored by a Persian architect, by royal command, during the reign of Gopadatta, son of Rajah Akh. The Hindus noticed that the Persian was a 'barbarian' who followed a foreign religion. During the renovation work, four sayings in Old Persian were inscribed at the side of the steps leading up to the grand entrance:

Maimar een satoon raj bihishti zargar, sal panjah wa chahar.
'The constuctor of these columns is the most humble Bihishti Zargar, in the year fifty and four.'

Een satoon bardast khwaja rukun bin murjan.
'Khwaja Rukun, son of Murjan, had these columns built.'

Dar een wagat yuz asaf dawa-i-paighambar-imikunad. Sal panjah wa chahar.
'At this time, Yuz Asaf announced his prophetic mission. In the year fifty and four.'

Aishan yuzu paighambar-i-bani israil ast.
'He is Jesus, prophet of the sons of Israel.'

Mullah Nadiri continues:

At the time of Gopadatta's reign, Yuz Asaf came from the Holy Land up into this valley, and announced that he was a prophet. He epitomised the peak of piety and of virtue, and proclaimed that he was himself his own message, that he lived in God day and night, and that he had made God accessible to the people of Kashmir. He called the people unto him, and the people of the valley believed in him. When the Hindus came to Gopadatta in indignation, pressing him to deal with the man, he turned them away.

I have also read in a Hindu book that this prophet is really Hazrat Issa,[21] the Spirit of God (God's peace and good will be on him), and he adopted the name Yuz Asaf. True knowledge is with God. He spent his life in this valley.

After his passing, his body was laid to rest in Mohalla Anzimarah. It is also said that the light of prophecy emanates from the tomb of this prophet. King Gopadatta ruled 60 years and two months, before passing away. After him, his son Gikaran mounted the throne and ruled for the span of 58 years.[22]

King Gopadatta ruled in Kashmir from the year 53 onwards. The year given in the text as year 54 of Rajah Gopodatta's reign was AD 107 by modern reckoning. The Rajah's rule thus fell within the reign of the great King Kanishka of the Kushan dynasty. The text does not indicate whether Jesus was still alive at the time.

No fewer than twenty-one references in ancient texts have been found so far to bear witness to Jesus' stay in Kashmir. Geographical testimony is provided by the names of many towns and places in Kashmir, for instance:

Aish-Muqam	Yus-Marg
Arya-Issa	Yusnag
Issa-Brari	Yusu
Issa-eil	Yuzu-dha
Issah-kush	Yuzu-dhara
Issa-mati	Yuzu-gam
Issa-Ta	Yuzu-hatpura
I-yes-Issa	Yuzu-kun
I-yes-th-Issa-vara	Yuzu-maidan
Kal-Issa	Yuzu-para
Ram-Issa	Yuzu-raja
Yus-mangala	Yuzu-varman

At the time when Jesus lived in Kashmir, the 'Happy Valley' was the centre of a great religious, cultural, intellectual and political revival. The kingdom of Kashmir was the centre of the enormous Indo-Scythian empire, and was ruled by the great King Kanishka I (AD 78–103) of the Kushan dynasty. An excellent statesman, and a kindly and wise ruler, Kanishka attempted to unite the motley mixture of races in his country through a policy of toleration and generosity. The combined harmony of Indian and Greek philosophy reached a peak in the culture of Gandhara. The academic centre of this meeting of cultures was the ancient University of Taxila, which was already famed far and wide.

In Buddhism Kanishka saw the perfect matrix for the realization of his ideas, and sought advice and instruction among the Buddhist monks. He was dismayed, however, to find that the Buddha's teaching had fragmented into so many schools and sects. Following the advice of the philosopher Parshwa, Kanishka summoned the Council of Haran (Harwan in Kashmir) with the aim of restoring unity to the fragmented religious community by a process of scrutinizing and formalizing the Buddhist texts. After more than three hundred years, another Buddhist Council took place – the Fourth – attended by 1500 scholars and monks. This Council helped to establish the new Mahayana as a popular religion. The priests of the Hinayana were reluctant to lose their privileges, and attempted a final stand in opposition to the Council, but they were unable to hold sway. Instead, the Mahayana was finally confirmed as an independent religion, opening a way to salvation for all people.

The present version of the *Lalitavistara* – the Buddhist text which shows the greatest similarities to the New Testament – also dates

from the Council of Haran.

Haran's location, just 12 kilometres from Srinagar, permits the speculation that Jesus himself might have been present at this important meeting; he may even have played an important part in it.

Kanishka was so impressed with the results of the Council that he converted to Buddhism himself, and he turned the administration of his kingdom over to the community of Buddhist monks, whose spiritual leader was the great Nagarjuna, the most influential philosopher of Mahayana Buddhism.

One more clue to the residence of Jesus in ancient Kashmir is provided by the text of the *Rajah Tarangini*, a history of Kashmir written in Sanskrit verses by Pandit Kalhana in the twelfth century. It counts as one of the earliest genuinely historical records in the literature of India. The *Rajah Tarangini* contains a great number of legends and stories passed down by oral tradition from ancient times. Many of these narratives were richly embellished, however, over the course of time, making it difficult now to recognize the historical facts. The work relates the story of a holy man named Isana, who performed miracles very similar to those of Jesus. Isana is said in addition to have saved the influential statesman Vazir from death on the cross, and to have brought him back to life. Afterwards Vazir became the ruler of Kashmir, and governed for forty-seven years. According to Kalhana, Isana was the last reformer in Kashmir, and lived and worked in the first century AD. It seems likely that the god-man Isana was none other than Issa-Jesus.

The Tomb of Jesus in Srinagar

During the Middle Ages, the story of Barlaam and Josaphat was a literary theme familiar to every educated person. There was a great variety of translations and versions of the story throughout Europe and the Near East, but the original has been attributed to St John of Damascus (John Damascene), a distinguished Arab Christian who lived in Jerusalem in around 700. The story – also known in some countries as 'The Prince and the Dervish' – may be quickly summarized.

Abaner, a powerful king of India, is told by an astrologer that his handsome and virtuous son Josaphat (or Joasaph) will convert

from Islam to Christianity. In order to avert fulfilment of the prophecy, the king has a magnificent palace built for the prince to grow up in, completely isolated from the outside world. Despite these measures taken by his father, Josaphat happens one day to see a blind man. On another occasion he encounters an aged man. And finally he sees a lifeless body. Because the young man has only ever otherwise seen young and beautiful people surrounding him in the palace, the encounters are completely new experiences for him, and open his eyes to the realities of human life. In the end, the prince meets the ascetic Barlaam, who converts him to Christianity. Although the King tries to dissuade his son from joining the new faith, and even offers him half his kingdom, Josaphat renounces all worldly riches, withdraws into solitude, and passes the rest of his life as a devout hermit.

This charming and touching tale is full of such profound truth that Barlaam and Joasaph were canonized as martyrs by the Roman Catholic Church in 1583, and given a feastday in the liturgical calendar. Under 27 November the rubric reads: 'In India, by the borders of Persia, Saints Barlaam and Joasaph. Their marvellous works were described by St John of Damascus.' Not for another century did it apparently occur to anyone that the story is simply a variant on the legend of Prince Siddhartha's royal upbringing, which led him to renounce his family and property and set out in search of Enlightenment. The name Josafat/Josaphat/Joasaph sounds so Jewish that no one ever doubted its Jewish origin. But in fact the the name can be traced back without difficulty to an utterly different source. John Damascene's Greek Joasaph is an attempt at the Arabic Judasaf, itself a borrowing from Kashmiri Yusasaph. But the Kashmiri and Arabic forms are spelling mistakes: the letters J and B are nearly identical in Syriac, Arabic and Persian, and Judasaf corresponds in fact to an original Budasaf – a word that is quite recognizable as *Bodhisattva*, an 'Enlightenment being', a Buddha in the making.

The exotic-sounding name Barlaam can also be traced back across the bridge of languages to its actual origin. In Arabic, *Balauhar* means the same as the Sanskrit word *Bhagvan*, 'the Exalted One', thus 'God'. The linquistic origins of Judasaf-Budasaf now make it clear that the Islamic prophet Yuz Asaf was really a Bodhisattva.

A Bodhisattva is characterized by all-encompassing, boundless compassion. He takes on the suffering of all beings, and leads them to liberation. His one aim is to save all beings from the mis-

ery of ignorance, even if this means he has to take on the guilt himself. Jesus also uncompromisingly followed this ideal, accepting the responsibility for all the sins of the world, and even finally allowing himself to be nailed to the Cross as a 'sacrificial lamb'. All the characteristics of a Bodhisattva are also to be found in Jesus.

The embodiment of limitless compassion in Buddhism is Avalokiteshvara, whose name derives from *Ishvara* ('Lord ruler') and *ava-lokita* ('[he] who looks down in compassion [on the world]'). Avalokiteshvara possesses great and miraculous powers which enable him to surmount all difficulties and dangers. From the beginning of the second century, Avalokiteshvara has often been portrayed in the visual arts with marks on the surfaces of his hands and feet symbolizing the Buddhist Wheel of Doctrine. Many Western commentators have recognized the stigmata of Jesus in these wheel signs, and have seen them as proof that Avalokiteshvara and Jesus are one and the same.

When the important Fourth Council of Kashmir was held in Haran near Srinagar under the auspices of Kanishka the Great, Jesus – if he was still alive – must have been more than eighty years old. We have suggested that he might even have had some part in this event, which was to have such great significance for the Buddhist world, as a highly revered saint – a suggestion for which admittedly there is no proof, although the known facts allow scope for such speculation. At any rate, the reforms introduced by the Council were in complete accord with the teachings of Jesus.

Fatima, the daughter of Muhammad, noted a saying of the Prophet to the effect that Jesus lived to the advanced age of 120 years.[23] There is, it is true, no archaeological evidence for this claim, but such an advanced age does not seem to be uncommon among the saints given to an ascetic way of life, who keep the physical body under the complete control of the spirit. There are many reports of Tibetan holy men who have attained ages of 130, 150, or even more.

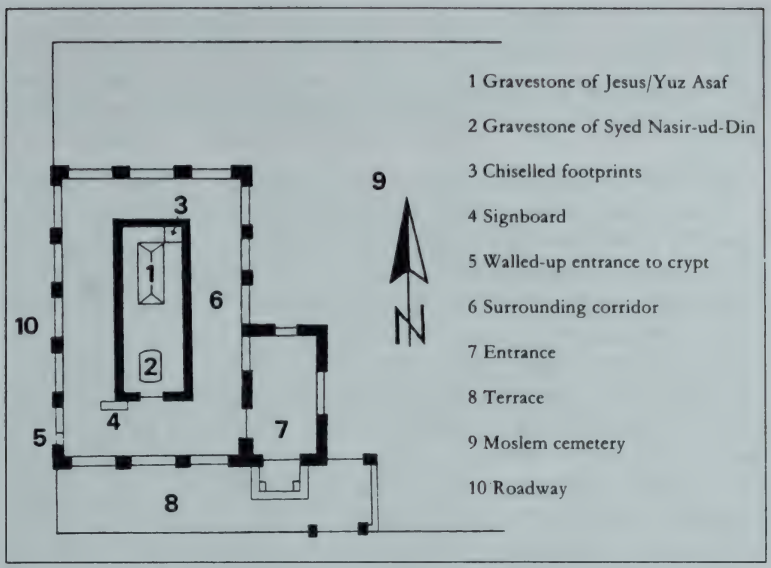
The historian Sheikh Al-Sa'id-us-Sâdiq, who lived until AD 962 in Khurasan (Iran), tells of the two journeys of Jesus to India, and of the ending of his life as Yuz Asaf in Kashmir in his famous work *Ikmâl-ud-Dîn*. This book was republished in Iran in 1883, and later translated into German by the famous expert on the East Max Müller. The book contains a parable of Yuz Asaf that is found in almost identical form in the New Testament:

> People, hear my words: a farmer goes to sow his fields. Then the birds come and eat the seed. Other seed falls on the path. And behold, some falls on the rock where there is no earth, and withers away. Some falls under the thorns and cannot grow. The seed that falls on the good earth, however, sprouts and brings forth fruit. The sower is the sage and the seeds are his words of wisdom. The seeds that are eaten by the birds are like people who do not understand the words. The seeds that fall on to the rock are the words of wisdom that go in one ear and come out the other. The seeds that land under the thorns are those who actually hear and see, but do not act accordingly. But the seeds that land on the good earth are like those who hear the words of wisdom and act accordingly.[24]

An Arabic version of the story of Barlaam and Josaphat, *The Book of Balauhar and Budasaf* (pp.285–286), published in Bombay, tells how Yuz Asaf died:

> And he reached Kashmir, which was the farthest region in which he ministered, and there his life came to a close. He left the world and bequeathed his inheritance to a certain disciple called Ababid who had served him; everything he did was perfect. And he admonished him and said to him, 'I have found a worthy shrine and decorated it and brought in lamps for the dying. I have gathered together the flock with the true face, which had been scattered and for whom I was sent. And now I shall draw breath in my ascent from the world, freeing my soul from my body. Heed the commands that were given to you, and do not stray from the path of truth but keep firmly to it with gratitude – and may Ababid be the leader.' He then bid Ababid to level off the place for him; then he stretched his legs out and lay down; and, turning his head to the north and his face to the east, he passed away.[25]

The tomb of the prophet Yuz Asaf is today located in the middle of Srinagar's old town, Anzimar, in the Khanyar quarter. The building later constructed around the tomb is called Rozabal or Rauza Bal. *Rauza* is a term used to denote the tomb of a celebrated personality: someone noble, wealthy or saintly. The building is rectangular in plan, and a small porch has been added to it. Above the entrance to the actual burial chamber is carved an inscription which declares that Yuz Asaf entered the valley of Kashmir many centuries ago, and that his life was dedicated to manifesting the truth. There are two different tombstones in the floor of the innermost burial chamber, surrounded by wooden railings to which strong beams have been added, covered over with a heavy cloth. The larger tombstone is that of Yuz Asaf, the smaller that of the Islamic saint Syed Nasîr-ud-Dîn, who was buried here as recently as in the fifteenth century.[26]



Plan of the Tomb of Jesus

Both tombstones are aligned north-south, following Islamic custom. As is also usual for Islamic tombs in India, these tombstones are just markers: the actual graves are located in a crypt below the floor of the building. A tiny opening allows a visitor to look down into the burial chamber below. The sarcophagus containing the earthly remains of Yuz Asaf is aligned east-west, in accordance with Jewish custom! This is clear proof that Yuz Asaf could not have been an Islamic saint. And among the Hindus and Buddhists, only ascetics (*sadhus*) and saints are buried (corpses are normally cremated). So here lies a person who was revered as a saint even before the arrival of Islam, when Kashmir was Mahayana Buddhist and Tantric Hindu. The etymology of the name Yuz Asaf has shown that it can have derived from *Bodhisattva*. This means that a person lies buried here who was revered in pre-Islamic times as a future Buddha, who according to legend came from the West, and whose grave is aligned in an east-west orientation, like the graves of the Jews. All this does not prove that it is the body of Jesus the Nazarene that rests in the ground here. Yet the many factors that indicate a close connection between Mahayana Buddhism and the origins of Christianity, the literary and historical evidence

that Jesus survived the Crucifixion, and the equally substantial references to Jesus' spending the last years or decades of his life in India, especially in Kashmir, would all together appear to justify the assumption that the body of Jesus does indeed lie buried in Rozabal.

It has always been a practice of worshippers to place candles around the tombstones. When the centuries-old layers of wax were removed some time ago, a sensational discovery was made: a pair of footprints was carved into the stone – a widespread tradition in Asia at the shrines of saints – and beside them lay a crucifix and a rosary. The footprints were meant to indicate the identity of the deceased, rather like a fingerprint.[27] As with the swastikas on Buddha's footprints, Yuz Asaf's footprints feature a unique and unmistakable mark of identification. The sculptor of the relief has very clearly shown the scars of the Crucifixion wounds. The position of the wounds even shows that the left foot had been nailed over the right, a fact that is confirmed by the bloodstains on the Turin Shroud. Because crucifixion was unknown as a form of death penalty in India, it is not only possible that the body of Jesus lies buried here, it is very likely indeed!

Many ancient literary works in Kashmir testify to the fact that Yuz Asaf and Jesus are the same person. One old manuscript describes the shrine as the grave of Issa Rooh-Allah ('Jesus, the Spirit of God', the Holy Spirit).[28] Thousands of the faithful make pilgrimages to this tomb – not just Muslims, but Hindus, Buddhists and Christians as well. The true importance of this modest shrine has been preserved in the memory of the descendants of the ancient Israelites to this day: they call the shrine 'the tomb of Hazrat Issa Sahib', the tomb of the Lord Jesus.

Age-old documents state that a protective building had already been constructed over the crypt by AD 112. Since that time, the tomb has been tended by the same family, with the office of tomb attendant being passed down in an unbroken line from father to son. In 1766, the keepers of the tomb were issued with a charter officially confirming the importance of the sacred site. In the formal decree issued by the Grand Mufti (or 'Teacher of Islamic religious law') Rahman Mir are the words: 'Here lies Yuz Asaf, who rebuilt the Temple of Solomon at the time of King Gopadatta, and who came as a prophet to Kashmir. He ministered to the people, declared his unity with God, and was a lawgiver to the people. Since then his tomb has been honoured by kings, state officials, high dignitaries and the common folk.'

I visited Srinagar in 1984 as a member of a delegation of specialists and journalists, and our team was formally received by the Governor of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr Farooq Abdullah. On that occasion I told Dr Abdullah that I would be very interested and gratified if the sarcophagus could be opened and examined. Some time previously, I had transferred a considerable sum of money – totalling many thousands of deutschmarks, the generous donation of a lady reader of the first edition of this book – to the administrators of the tomb, and the renovation work it financed was under way at that very moment, so I judged it a good opportunity to suggest opening up the grave. Governor Abdullah at once made all the necessary arrangements for the unsealing and inspection of the tomb chamber, and even assured us of police protection should any physical attack be made by irate fundamentalists.

On the evening before the projected tomb opening, an outbreak of shooting in the old town of Srinagar resulted in the loss of seven lives. The chief of police thereupon urged us not to proceed with the operation, fearing a further escalation of the disturbances, and saying that he could no longer vouch for our safety.

During the 1960s, the unexplained disappearance of a hair of the Prophet Muhammad's beard that had been kept in the Hazratbal mosque in Srinagar, regarded as the most sacred Islamic relic in the country, led to a public uprising in Kashmir which lasted for weeks. The people of the valley considered the central government in Delhi responsible: the joining of Kashmir with the Indian Union in 1948 has never been accepted by large sections of the (predominantly Islamic) population, and this has made the 'Happy Valley' a chronic trouble spot.

In the face of such potentially explosive religious sensitivities, we were unfortunately obliged to postpone the operation we had planned to some later date.

And up to the time of writing (May 1993), it has still not been possible to have the sarcophagus opened and studied. Since the summer of 1989 a situation tantamount to civil war has developed in Kashmir due to the activities of various guerrilla groups. All tourist travel in the valley has ground to a halt. The old town area of Srinagar, in which the tomb is located, is the central lair of the underground fighters who, for the most part, lie hidden while the Indian army scours every street corner and alleyway. Regretfully, I must therefore strongly discourage any visits to the tomb until the situation in Kashmir improves. There seems to be little prospect of

that at the moment. In any case, in view of the fact that the site of the tomb is right next to the River Jhelum and must have been flooded many times over the past two thousand years, not too much should be hoped for from the opening of the sarcophagus.

Jesus or Paul?

Many faithful Christians may object that with the arguments I adduce in this book I am robbing Christianity of an essential element, an element that alone can give hope and solace: redemption from sin (which causes the suffering in the world) by the vicarious sacrificial death of Jesus Christ, for all those who acknowledge his teaching. But it is precisely this form of the doctrine of salvation in traditional Christianity that rests almost exclusively on the work of Paul, and was never taught by Jesus. Paul taught that the whole function of Jesus centres on his sacrificial death, that through the shedding of his blood he has absolved the faithful of their sins and released them from chaos and the domination of Satan. In fact, Paul does not relay a single syllable of the direct teaching of Jesus in his epistles, nor does he tell a single one of his parables. Instead, he builds up a philosophy of his own on the basis of his own personal understanding (or misunderstanding) of Jesus' teaching.

Paul insists that on account of the sin of Adam all people are subject to the wrath of God from the start (see Ephesians 2:3), and are lost without exception (Romans 5:18; 1 Corinthians 15:18), for all are subject to sin (Romans 3:9; Galatians 3:22; Colossians 2:14). God has given his judgement of condemnation against all people (Romans 5:16).

Out of the Good News brought by Jesus, Paul has made news that is dark and threatening, from the menace of which only he could show the way out. And this way out was the salvation of humanity through the sacrificial death of Christ: 'Therefore as by the offence of one, judgement came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life' (Romans 5:18). And in the letter to the Colossians he describes Jesus as 'Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross' (Colossians 2:14).

But the terrible thing about the doctrine of salvation according to Paul is his attitude that the individual can contribute nothing

towards his salvation in his miserable life: not through any good works of his own, not through any change of lifestyle however much for the better, can the individual justify his being saved, reconciled with God (cf Romans 3:24, 9:16; 1 Corinthians 1:29; Galatians 2:16).

For according to Paul it is exclusively the grace of God which brings us to salvation: 'For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast' (Ephesians 2:8–9).

According to Paul a person may be saved merely by the single act of baptism, becoming a child of God and a completely new being. Every claim to cooperating in salvation by one's own effort is, by this teaching, to be regarded as a belittling of the sacrifice of Jesus, as an attempt to save oneself that cannot but fail. Conversely, every person, however good and exemplary a life he may have led, must in this schema be considered lost if he fails to accept the sacrifice on the Cross for himself personally as his complete salvation. Such ideas are totally alien to Jesus.

Most Christians are of the opinion that the greatness, the uniqueness, of Christianity stands and falls with this teaching. Yet it proves to be a fiction, far removed from the ideas of Jesus. Not even a hint of this so-called Christian doctrine of salvation is to be found in the Sermon on the Mount – the quintessence of Jesus' message – or in the Lord's Prayer (the Our Father), or in the traditional parables told by Jesus!

Jesus was not concerned with constructing a philosophy that might be based on his life and on his message that might free people from the sufferings of earthly existence – he actually lived what he taught. Toleration at all times, care for the welfare and benefit of others (human and animal), giving and sharing, selflessness in helping others to carry the burden of their suffering, a universal and unconditional love for all – this is the way of perfection that Jesus demonstrated in his life.

APPENDIX

Chronological Table

The Middle East

BC

c.1750	Abraham leaves Haran with his tribe
c.1730	Hebrew tribes travel to Egypt, led by Joseph
c.1550	Rule of Hyksos ends: start of oppression
c.1250	Moses; the Exodus from Egypt
c.1200	Settlement in Palestine
965-926	King Solomon
after 926	Partition into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah
c.870	The prophet Elijah
722	Sargon II of Assyria conquers Israel; the ten tribes of Israel disappear for ever.
c.590	Possible reference by prophet Ezekiel to the Temple in Kashmir
587	End of the kingdom of Judah
	Babylonian Exile (lasting about 50 years)
7	Birth of Jesus
4	Death of Herod the Great

AD

6	Archelaus is deposed; 12-year-old Jesus in Temple
6-c.30	First journey of Jesus to India
c.30	Return from India, and entry into Jerusalem
31	John the Baptist executed
33	Crucifixion of Jesus
c.35	Paul meets Jesus in Damascus and is converted
c.36	Jesus with the king of Andrapa
post-36	Jesus in Edessa and with the king of Nisibis

India

BC

c.2500	Indus Culture (Harappa)
c.1300	Compilation of Vedas
6th century	The 'Lost Tribes of Israel' settle in northern India
563-483	Gautama Siddhartha Sakyamuni, (the) Buddha
5th century	First writing of Buddhist sutras
c.250	The Indian Emperor Ashoka sends Buddhist missionaries as far as Marseilles (Roquepertuse)
1st century	Mahayana Buddhism moulded by the idea of the Saviour (Bodhisattva)

AD

before 50	Jesus stays in the university town of Taxila (Punjab); appears at the court of the Indo-Parthian ruler, Gundafor
c.50	Jesus at the court of the local king Gopananda (Gopadatta), ruled about 49–109
post-50	Jesus travels as a itinerant preacher under the name Yuz Asaf in Kashmir and neighbouring regions
post-70	Jesus meets the local king Shalivahana
78	Inscription on the Temple of Solomon in Srinagar
c.78-103	Reign of King Kanishka
c.80	Fourth Buddhist Council at Haran (Harwan) in Kashmir
post-80	The body of Jesus entombed in Srinagar

neo-synretic.net-work

'Re-Ligio' is the relationship of one person to the great creative spirit that links everything together. All that exists shall also pass on. In this way, as humankind grows and changes, so should religion adapt to changing relationships and grow. If the great religions of the world have not changed for hundreds of years, it is mostly due to the cementation of power, which all priestly castes exert to the detriment of the peace of mind of the masses.

Changing circumstances require reforms in politics, economics, culture and, most of all, in religion, or the realm of ethics. If a religion does not lead to external or, more importantly, inner freedom, then it has lost its purpose and should no longer be accepted. Christians today are seldom content and are controlled by a terrible fear of death, because they don't know that the historical Jesus originally taught them the law of karma and reincarnation. Muslim societies are often terrorised by the violence of uneducated and uncivilised men (so-called fundamentalists) who have no idea that Mohammad's predecessor, the great prophet Issa (Jesus), preached peacefulness, tolerance and love for every living creature.

As in Islam, the historical Jesus (not the mystical Christ of Paul) also plays an important role in Hinduism, Buddhism and Judaism. In truth, he is a common link between these different cultures. If we succeed in going back to the roots of a peaceful religion and set the teachings of the historical Jesus in the foreground again, that will be a sure way to everlasting world peace. All over the world, the Wheel of Knowledge (Dharma Chakra) must now turn a little farther again, or otherwise, in a short time, humanity will annihilate itself.

Since *Jesus Lived in India* first appeared in 1981, it has been translated into thirty-two languages. In the last five years, more than 2,000 people around the world have joined together in a spiritual network to investigate and propagate the historical Boddhisattva Jesus and his universal teaching—the new syncretism. The motto is: 'Prove everything, and keep the good!' (1 Th 5,21). The fundamentals for this new philosophy are three books written by the author:

1. *Jesus Lived in India*: The complete life of the historical Jesus.
2. *The Original Jesus*: The syncretic way to redemption, the teachings of the original Jesus.
3. *The Jesus Conspiracy*: His legacy, which he left behind for our current era.

Anybody, regardless of religion or caste, who is moved by these ideas and would like to take part in any way in this network is encouraged to contact the author at www.HolgerKersten.com.

I look forward to hearing soon from you personally.

Freiburg, Germany
December 2001

Holger Kersten

NOTES

Chapter 1: The Unknown Life of Jesus

1. A second road to Ladakh has recently (1990) been opened for foreigners, leading over the Rohtang Pass from the mountain town of Manali in the state of Himachal Pradesh.
2. Nikolas Notovitch, *The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ*, translated from the French edition of 1894, revised, and with an added preface by Notovitch, London, 1895.
3. Issa is the Muslim Arabic name for Jesus.
4. Persian *panj* 'five', *ab* 'water'; literally therefore 'five waters'.
5. Jainism, a very old Indian monastic religion, closely related to Buddhism, but more ascetic. It was established in its present form by Mahavira, a contemporary of Buddha.
6. Pali, a north Indian dialect of the centuries after Buddha's death, used for the scriptural canon of southern Theravada (Hinayana) Buddhism.
7. Biographical information is given in the *Dictionnaire National des Contemporains*, Vol.3, p.274, Paris, 1901.
8. E. V. Bogdanovitch, *L'Alliance franco-russe.*
9. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fol.R.226.
10. See Public Record Office, Kew, FO 371/113 No.29196.
11. Bibliografija Periodicheskikh Izdaniy Rossiy (1901–1906). Leningrad, 1958.
12. N. C. Chaudhuri, *Scholar Extraordinary*, London, 1974; p.325.
13. Year 10, p.211, Berlin, 1895.
14. *The Hindustan Times*, New Delhi, 11 July 1988.
15. N. Roerich, *Altai-Himalaya, A Travel Diary*, New York, 1929; p.89.
16. H. Merrick, *In the World's Attick*, London, 1931; p.215.
17. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Fol.M.715.
18. Inventory number 88.177.
19. In the *Dictionnaire National des Contemporains*, Vol. 3, p. 274, Paris, 1901, it is recorded that Notovitch was accepted into the Légion d'Honneur with the grade of *Officier de l'Instruction publique* in the year 1889 *pour avoir donné au musée du Trocadero de précieuses collections d'objets rapportés de l'Inde et de la Perse.*
20. Moravian Church, also called the Herrnhüter community.

Chapter 2: Who Was Jesus?

1. Tacitus, *Annals* 15:44.
2. Pliny the Younger, *Letters*, 10:96f.
3. Suetonius, *Vitae Caesarum*; Nero (16); Claudius (25:4).
4. Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* XX,9:1; XVIII,3:3.
5. 1:47.
6. Arthur Drews, *Die Christusmythe*, Jena, 2nd edition 19ll; p.3.
7. Translated from the German edition by Wilhelm Reeb, Leipzig, 1923.
8. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* 7; 89:2f.
9. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 3:12.
10. G. Bornkamm, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Stuttgart, 9th edition 1971.
11. Quoted from *Der Spiegel* No. 14, 1966.
12. J. Jeremias, 1951.
13. Quoted from *Der Spiegel* No. 14, 1966.
14. W. Nestle, *Krisis des Christentums*, 1947; p.89.
15. F. Overbeck, *Christentum und Kultur*, published posthumously, 1919.
16. Quoted from H. Ackermann, *Entstellung und Klärung der Botschaft Jesu*, 1961.
17. A. Deissmann, *Paulus*, Tübingen, 2nd edition 1925.
18. E. Grimm, *Die Ethik Jesu*, 1917.
19. A. Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*, Tübingen, 2nd edition 1913; p.512.
20. Quoted from *Der Spiegel* No. 14, 1966.
21. *Der Stern* No. 16, 1973.
22. Dardic: a group of ancient Indo–European languages spoken in western Himalaya, Karakorum and the Hindu Kush. The best attested are Kashmiri and Shina.
23. Anagarika Govinda, *The Way of the White Clouds.*

Chapter 3: Moses and the Children of God

1. J. Juergens, *Der biblische Moses*, Munich, 1928.
2. Prof. Flinders Petrie, *Researches in Sinai*, 1906.
3. Cf Exodus 19:11, 24:17, 33:9; Deuteronomy 4:11, 4:24, 4:33, 4:36, 5:4, 5:5, 5:23, 9:3, 32:22.
4. W. F. Irland, *Die Memoiren David Rizzios*, Leipzig, 1852.
5. Dummelow, *Commentary on the Holy Bible*, p.115.
6. Dr Mateer, *The Land of Charity*, quoted in H. P. Blavatsky, *Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II.
7. Cf F. Max Müller, *Indien* in Weber, *Indische Skizzen*, Berlin, 1857.
8. F. Bernier, *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, London, 1891; p.432.
9. G. Konzelmann, *Aufbruch der Hebräer*, Munich, 1976; p.37ff.
10. A sound-change in Old Persian transformed *Sindh* into *Hind*, and this word soon came to denote the entire subcontinent and its inhabitants

(*Hindu*). In later times the h was also dropped, leaving Ind-, which then became *India*.
11. Cf Joshua 24:2–3.
12. Cf Leviticus 11; Deuteronomy 14.
13. The Revd Dr Joseph Wolff, *Narrative of a Mission to Bokhara in the Years 1843–1845*, Vol. I, pp.13–20, London, 1845.
14. Wolff, as above, p.58.
15. London, 1840, p.166.
16. Dr J. Bryce and Dr K. Johnson, *A Comprehensive Description of Geography*, London and Glasgow, 1880; p.25.
17. G. Moore, *The Lost Tribes*, London, 1861.
18. K. Jettmar, *Felsbilder im Karakorum*, in *Spektrum der Wissenschaft*, December 1983; p.22–32.

Chapter 4: The Childhood of Jesus

1. G. Kroll, *Auf den Spuren Jesu*, Leipzig, 1964; p.63ff.
2. P. Schnabel, *Der jungste Keilschrifttext*, in *Zeitschrift für Assyrologie*, NF 2(36); p.66ff.
3. Origen, *Gen. Hom.* XIV, 3.
4. Translated in quotation from Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. I, Tübingen, 4th edition 1968; p.98.
5. The teaching of reincarnation is based on the principle that each soul goes through a process of evolution lasting many lifetimes, and is consequently reborn in a human or other body again and again, in order to accumulate further experience and finally achieve the divine state.
6. The Dalai Lama, *My Country and My People*.
7. Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*.
8. Vicki Mackenzie, *Reincarnation: The Boy Lama*, London, 1988.
9. E. J. Eitel, *A Handbook of Chinese Buddhism*, Tokyo, 1904.

Chapter 5: Eastern Wisdom in the West

1. Cf Le Coq, *Ostturkistan: Waldschmidt, Zentralasien*, Lüders, Die literarischen Funde.
2. From H.-J. Klimkeit, *Gottes- und Selbsterfahrung in der gnostisch–buddhistischen Religionsbegegnung Zentralasiens*, in *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte*, Vol. 35, 1983, p.236–247.
3. Although a pre-Christian date of compilation for the texts has been accepted for many years, several researchers have recently suggested that parts of the texts were written around the time of Jesus' birth or shortly afterwards, and refer to Jesus directly. Cf M. Baigent and R. Leigh, *The Private Jesus: The Dead Sea Scrolls and the Truth about Early Christianity*, Munich, 1991.

4. In art this inscription is usually shown as the abbreviation for the Latin words *Iesus, Nazarenus, Rex Iudaeorum*, or INRI.
5. The Arabs called the early Christians *Nasrani* or *Nasara*.
6. John M. Robertson, *Die Evangelienmythen*, Jena, 1910; p.51ff.
7. *The Antiquities of the Jews* XVIII, 5:2.
8. Quoted from J. Klausner, *Jesus von Nazareth*, 1952; p.144.
9. Abbreviated form: 1QIs.
10. Abbreviated form: 1QIIs.
11. Abbreviated form: 1Qp Hab.
12. Abbreviated form: 1QS.
13. Abbreviated form: 1QSa.
14. Abbreviated form: 1QH.
15. *The Jewish War* II, 8:3.
16. From Albert Schweitzer, *Geschichte der Leben-Jesu-Forschung*.
17. *The Jewish War* II, 8:7.
18. The Jewish year has twelve months that alternate between 29 and 30 days each, totalling 50 weeks of seven days. To adjust to fit the actual solar year a thirteenth month, the second Adar or Veadar, has to be inserted seven times in every nineteen–year period. The 'emergent year' in relation to Jewish chronology is the 'Day of Creation' corresponding in the Gregorian calendar to 20 September 3760 BC.
19. A. Hilgenfeld, *Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie* (1860–1862); Bauer, *Essener*, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Suppl. bd.* IV, S p.426ff.
20. Cf Emile Burnouf, *Le Bouddhisme en Occident*, in *Revue des Deux Mondes*, 1888.
21. Origen, *Contra Celsum* 6:27.
22. Nag Hammadi Codex II 3, 121:15–19.
23. According to Edmunds, *Buddhist and Christian Gospels*, there are 112.
24. C. G. Montefiore, *The Synoptic Gospels*, 2nd edition 1927.
25. Cf Genesis 17:1ff.
26. Cf Exodus 12:43ff; Ezekiel 44:9.
27. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II; p.210.
28. The Syrian Arabic form is *Alavites*, the Turkish *Alevites*, while in areas in which Farsi (Persian) is spoken, the general term is *Ali–Ilahi* ('Ali-deifier').
29. The Nusairis themselves derive their name from that of one of their leaders during the 8th century, Ibn Nusair, a derivation regarded as highly dubious by academics because it was probably formulated in order to exonerate the Nusairis from a charge of heresy. Cf R. Dussaud, *Histoire et religion des Nosairis*, Paris, 1900; I. Goldziher, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, 4/1901; H.-J. Schoeps, *Theologie und Geschichte des Urchristentums*; G. Lüling, *Die Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muhammad*, Erlangen, 1981.

30. The Alawite groups of Anatolia (Kizilbas, Tahtaci, Yürükas, and the spiritual élite of the Bektashi dervishes), who live mostly as mountain farmers, keepers of cattle and nomads, represent around 15 to 30 per cent of the entire Turkish population.
31. This does not apply to the Syrian Nusairis, whose religious traditions are the privilege of men only.
32. E. Müller, *Kulturhistorische Studien zur Genese pseudo-islamischer Sektengebilde in Vorderasien*, Wiesbaden, 1967.
33. A. J. Dierl, *Geschichte und Lehre des anatolische Alevismus–Bektashismus*, Frankfurt, 1985.
34. A. J. Dierl, as above, p.125f.
35. Further literature on this topic includes: J. K. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, Hartford, 1937; E. Gross, *Das Vilajetname des Hadji Bektash*, Leipzig, 1927; A. Haas, *Die Bektashi*, Berlin, 1987; G. Jacob, *Die Bektashije...* in *Abhdlg. d. königl. bayer. Akademie d. Wissensch.* I.Kl.XXIV,Bd.III, Munich, 1909; *Beiträge zur Kenntnis des Derwisch–Ordens der Bektaschije*, Berlin, 1908; *Das Fortleben von antiken Mysterien und Altchristlichem im Islam*, in *Der Islam*, 1911, p.232ff; H. Kirchmaier, *über die Yezidi*, in *Der Islam*, 34, 1959; E. Kohn, *Vorislamisches in einigen vorderasiatischen Sekten und Derwischorden*, in *Ethnologische Studien*, 1931, p.295ff; Henri Lammens, *L'Islam*, Beirut, 1941; R. Strothmann, *Morgenländische Geneimsekten in der abendländischen Forschung*, Berlin, 1953; *Der Islam: Sekten*, in *Hdb. d. Rel. wissensch.*, Berlin, 1948.

Chapter 6: The Secret of Jesus

1. Gallup Poll on European Values, London, 1983; G. Gallup jr, *Encounters with Immortality*, 1983.
2. According to L. von Schröder (*Pythagoras und die Inder*, Leipzig, 1884), Pythagoras was 'the bringer of Indian traditions to Greece'. But leaving aside the question of whether Pythagoras really visited India in person, cultural contacts between Greece and the India of Buddha's day are uncontested.
3. Friedrich Weinreb, *Das Buch Jonah*, Zurich, 1970; p.90ff.
4. *The Antiquities of the Jews* XVIII, 1:3.
5. *The Jewish War* II, 8:14.
6. For example: Philo of Alexandria (around 25 BC to AD 50) in his work *On Dreaming* (I, 139); Justin Martyr (about 100–165) in his *Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew* (LXXXVIII, 5); Tatian (2nd century) in his *Speech to the Greeks* (VII, 5–6); Synesius of Cyrene (around 370–413) in *About Dreams* (140 B); and Augustine (354–430) in *On the Greatness of the Soul* (XX, 34) and in *Confessions* (I, 6,9)

7. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* V, 9; E. Benz, *Indische Einflüsse auf die frühchristliche Theologie*, Wiesbaden, 1951.
8. Cf E. Pagels, *Versuchung durch Erkenntnis. Die gnostischen Evangelien.*
9. H de Lubac, *Textes Alexandrins et Bouddhiques, RechScRel* 27, 1937.
10. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* I, 15.
11. Clement of Alexandria, *Admonition* I, 6.
12. Clement of Alexandria, *Stromateis* IV, 160:3.
13. E. Seeberg, *Ammonios Sakas*, in *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, Bd. LX, 1941; E. Benz, *Indische Einflüsse auf die frühchristliche Theologie*, as above; Cope, quoted in Karl Hoheisel, *Das frühe Christentum und die Seelenwanderung*, in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*, 1984–1985.
14. Origen, *De Principiis.*
15. Origen, *Contra Celsum.*
16. Gregory of Nyssa, *The Catechetical Oration* VIII, 9.
17. M. Pryse, *Reincarnation in the New Testament*, Ansata, 1980.
18. Bhagvan Dass, *Krishna and the Theory of Avatars.*
19. Sri Yukteswar, *The Holy Science* (Self-Realization Fellowship, Los Angeles).
20. F. Hitching, *Die letzten Rätsel unserer Welt*, Frankfurt, 1982; p.118ff.

Chapter 7: The Shroud – A Legacy of Jesus

1. Flavius Josephus, *The Antiquities of the Jews* XVIII, 1:1,6.
2. According to more recent linguistic research by the philologist the Revd Dr Günther Schwarz, however, this is an error of translation. The Aramaic word for 'sword', *zeyana*, is distinguished only by a tiny hook mark from *ziyyuna*, '(spiritual) nourishment', a meaning that would give the quotation a completely different sense.
3. Epiphanius, *Her.* 30.
4. W. Marxsen, *Die Auferstehung Jesu*, Gütersloh, 1960.
5. Cf Kersten and Gruber, *The Jesus Conspiracy: The Truth About the Resurrection*, Element Books, 1994. The following sections on the subject of the Turin Shroud are largely based on this work. Because the results of Dr Gruber's historical investigation represent the most up-to-date stage of Shroud research and significantly support my own argument, some fundamental passages are quoted and/or paraphrased here. The same is true of passages in Chapter Eight.
6. Ian Wilson, *The Turin Shroud*, London, 1978.
7. Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus* II.
8. Eusebius, *Historia Ecclesiastica* I, 13; II, 6–8.
9. The pilgrim Aetheria of Aquitaine visited Edessa in 383 on her return from the Holy Land, and brought from there a copy of the letter to the West. Cf J. F. Gamurrini (ed.), *S Hilarii Tractatus et Hymni et S*

Silviae Aquitanae Perigrinatio ad loca sancta. . . ex cod. Arretino depromps, Biblioteca dell'Academia Storico-Giuridica, Vol. IV, Rome, 1887; H. Pétré, *Peregrinatio Aetheriae, Sources Chrétiennes*, 21, Paris, 1948.

10. W. Cureton, *Ancient Syriac Documents Relative to the Earliest Establishment of Christianity in Edessa and the Neighbouring Countries*, London, 1864; G. Philips (ed.), *The Doctrine of Addai the Apostle*, London, 1876.
11. *Narratio* (PG 113), English translation printed in Wilson, *The Turin Shroud*, as above.
12. E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder*, Leipzig, 1899; p.182.
13. Evagrius, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, Migne, PG, LXXX, VI/2, Sp. 2748–49.
14. W. Bulst, *Das Grabtuch von Turin*, Karlsruhe, 1978; p.111.
15. P. Vignon, *Le Saint Suaire de Turin devant la science, l'archologie, l'histoire, l'iconographie, la logique*, Paris, 1938; E. A. Wuenschel, *Self-Portrait of Christ: The Holy Shroud of Turin*, New York, 1954; Wilson, *The Turin Shroud*, as above. Paul Maloney further reduces the Vignon list from twenty features to just nine that even the most sceptical of observers would have to accept. P. Maloney, *The Shroud of Turin: Traits and Peculiarities of Image and Cloth Preserved in Historical Sources*: talk given at the International Symposium 'La Sindone e le Icone', Bologna, May 1989.
16. Quoted in M. Green, *Enshrouded in Silence*, *Ampleforth Journal* 74, 1969; p.319–345.
17. Ordericus Vitalis, *Historia Ecclesiastica*, TLIII,IX,8.
18. Gervase of Tilbury, *Otia Imperialia*, III.
19. Quoted from Wilson, *The Turin Shroud*, as above.
20. In Rome, Genoa and Paris, Mandylions were on display at this time, but were all hand–painted copies; none of them claimed to be the original. The so-called 'Towel of Veronica' is a copy of this type; its name can be traced to the description *vera icon* ('true image') used of the Mandylion.
21. E. Hezck, *Genua und seine Marine im Zeitalter der Kreuzzüge, Innsbruck*, 1886; p.66.
22. *Epist. Innoc.*, Migne, PL 215, Sp. 433f.
23. Charny is the same name as Charnay; at that time the French language had not yet developed a standardized orthography.
24. For further details of the exciting history of the cloth, see Kersten and Gruber, *The Jesus Conspiracy*, as above.
25. H. Thurston, *The Holy Shroud...*, in *The Month*, 101, 1903; p.19.
26. J. Reban, *Christus wurde lebendig begraben*, Zurich, 1982.
27. W. Bulst, *Das Grabtuch von Turin*, Karlsruhe, 1978; p.123.
28. Kersten and Gruber, *The Jesus Conspiracy*, as above.

Chapter 8: 'Death' and 'Resurrection'

1. C. H. Dodd, *Historical Tradition in the Fourth Gospel*, Cambridge, 1963; p.423; S. G. F. Brandon, *Jesus and the Zealots*, Manchester, 1967; p.16.
2. H. Lincoln, M. Baigent and R. Leigh, *The Holy Grail and its Legacy*.
3. G. Ghiberti, *La Sepoltura di Gesù*, Rome, 1982; p.43.
4. P. Barbet, *Die Passion Jesu Christi in der Sicht eines Chirurgen*, Karlsruhe, 1953; W. Bulst and J. Pfeiffer, *Das Turiner Grabtuch und das Christus bild*, Frankfurt, 1987, p.87f; N. Currer-Briggs, *The Holy Grail and the Shroud of Christ*, Maulden, 1984; p.16.
5. P. G. Bagatti and J. T. Milik, *Gli scavi del 'Dominus flevit'*, *La necropoli del periodo Romano*, Jerusalem, 1958.
6. The only correct design of a tomb structure is described in the Mishnah, in *Baba Bathra* 6,8.
7. P. Savio, *Ricerche storiche sulla Santa Sindone*, Turin, 1957; p.33ff.
8. G. Zaninotto, *GV* 20, 1–8, *Giovanni testimone oculare della risurrezione di Gesù?*, *Sindon*, 1, 1989; p.148. A passage in the *Acta Philippi* (143) is of special interest on this point, 'Philip asked to be buried in papyrus leaves, and that no linen cloth was laid on him, so as avoid being treated in the same way as Christ, who was wrapped in a Sindon' (*en sindoni eneilethe*).
9. The embalming of Jacob and Joseph (Genesis 50:2–3,26) are exceptions, representing the ancient Egyptian custom.
10. E. Haenchen, *Das Johannes-Evangelium: Ein Kommentar*, Tübingen, 1980; p.556.
11. Shabbat 23:5.
12. A. Dessy, *La sepoltura dei crocifissi*, Sindon, 1, 1989: p.42.
13. L. Boulos, *Medicinal Plants of North Africa*, Algonac, 1983, p.128; J. A. Duke, *Medicinal Plants of the Bible*, New York, 1983, p.19; H. N. Moldenke and A. N. Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*, New York, 1952; p.35. Cf further G. W. Reynolds, *The Aloes of South Africa*, Johannesburg, 1950; p.394ff.
14. F. N. Hepper, *The Identity and Origin of Classical Bitter Aloes*, *Palestine Exploration Quarterly*, 120, 1988; p.146–148.
15. D. Grindlay and T. Reynolds, *The Aloe Vera Phenomenon: A review of the properties and modern uses of the leaf parenchyma gel*, *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*, 16, 1986; p.117–151.
16. Moldenke and Moldenke, *Plants of the Bible*, as above.
17. A. W. Anderson, *Plants of the Bible*, New York, 1957.
18. A. Feuillet, *The Identification and the Disposition of the Funerary Linens of Jesus' Burial According to the Fourth Gospel*, *SSI*, 4, 1982, p.18; Zaninotto, *Sindon* as above, p.160. Blinzler was the first to point this out: J. Blinzler, *Das Turiner Grablinnen und die Wissenschaft*, Ettal, 1952.

In Matthew and Luke the verb *eneileo* suggesting the 'weight' of the packing is moderated by using the verb *entylisso*, which means merely 'wrapped in'.

19. H. Mödder, *Die Todesursache bei der Kreuzigung*, in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 144, 1948, p.50–59; F. T. Zugibe, *Death by Crucifixion, Canadian Society of Forensic Science Journal*, 17, 1984.
20. 'The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber . . .' (Matthew 11:19).
21. Flavius Josephus, *Vita* IV, 75.
22. Petrus de Natalibus, *Catalogus Sanctorum*, Lyon, 1508. Petrus de Natalibus bases his statements on John of Damascus.
23. B. Bagatti and E. Testa, *Il Golgota e la Croce*, Jerusalem, 1978; p.24. The apocryphal Gospel of Peter calls the place where the tomb was excavated 'Joseph's Garden'.
24. Flavius Josephus, *The Jewish War* IV, 5:2.
25. At least one scriptural authority also finds it extremely odd that Joseph had his own tomb constructed right next to a place of execution: Haenchen, *Das Johannes–Evangelium*, as above; p.564.
26. But John was possibly making a reference to Christ as the symbol of the true Paschal Lamb. Hyssop served an important function in the ritual commemorating the first Passover (Exodus 12:22). In Mark, the corresponding passage says the sponge of vinegar was stuck on a reed (*kalamos*). Did John intentionally use hussopos (*'hyssop'*) as a replacement for *kalamos*?
27. R. Seydel, Das Evangelium von Jesus, Leipzig, 1882; p.273.
28. J. Blinzler, *Das Turiner Grablinnen und die Wissenschaft*, as above, p.31.
29. H. Bardtke, *Die handschriftenfunde am Toten Meer*, Berlin, 1958; p.42.
30. G. Ricci, *Kreuzweg nach dem Leichentuch von Turin*, Rome, 1971; p.68ff.
31. R. Hoare, *The Testimony of the Shroud*, London, 1978; p.53.
32. Letter of 6 March 1990.
33. J. S. Kennard, *The Burial of Jesus, JBL* 74, 1955; p.238.
34. Cf R. Thiel, *Jesus Christus und die Wissenschaft*, Berlin, 1938; p.100f.
35. At the so-called 'Ascension', Jesus evidently withdrew from the area in which he had been working, and possibly travelled as far as India.
36. G. Schwarz, *'Anhistemi' und 'anastasis' in den Evangelien, in Biblische Notizen, Beiträge zur exegetischen Diskussion*, 10, 1979; p.35–40.
37. G. Schwarz, *Tod, Auferstehung, Gericht und ewiges Leben nach den ersten drei Evangelien, Via Mundi*, 55, 1988.
38. Cf G. Schwarz, *Wenn die Worte nicht stimmen: Dreissig entstellte Evangelientexte wiederhergestellt*, Munich, 1990; p.56ff. Because the tradition has obviously confused 'resuscitation' with the theological concept of 'resurrection', it is not possible to pinpoint the exact meaning in the biblical texts.

Chapter 9: After the Crucifixion

1. W. Lange-Eichbaum, *Genie, Irrsinn und Ruhm*, Munich, 6th edition 1967; p.496ff.
2. Lactantius, *Institutiones* 5:3.
3. Vol. 3, p.197ff.
4. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, as above, Vol. II, p.299ff.
5. Cf *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. I, p.199ff.
6. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. I, p.206ff.
7. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, p.303.
8. Arabic for 'Revered Jesus'.
9. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, p.316.
10. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, p.319.
11. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, p.320.
12. *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. II, p.322.
13. J. Jeremias, essay in *Nachrichten aus der Akad. d. Wiss. Göttingen, I. Phil.-Hist. Kl.*, 1953; p.95ff.
14. Hennecke-Schneemelcher, *Neutestamentliche Apokryphen*, Vol. I, p.199ff.
15. Cf J. Jeremias, *Nachrichten* as above, p.99f.
16. G. Lüling, *über den Ur-Quran*, Erlangen, 1977; *Die Wiederentdeckung des Propheten Muhammad*, Erlangen, 1981.
17. Cf H. Glasenapp, *Die Literaturen Indiens*, Stuttgart, 1961; p.129–135.
18. From H. R. Hoffmann, *Kalacakra Studies* I, in *Central Asiatic Journal*, Vol. 13, 1969, p.52–73; Vol. 15, 1972, p.298–301.
19. First and best of the four ages (*yuga*).
20. Quoted in translation from A. Hohenberger, *Das Bhavishyapurana*, in *Münchener Indologische Studien* 5, Wiesbaden, 1967; p.17f.
21. Arabic for 'Revered Jesus'.
22. *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p.69
23. Source: *Kans-ul-Ammal*, Vol. II, p.34.
24. *Ikmâl-ud-Dîn*, p. 327; cf Matthew 13:1–23; Mark 4:1–20; Luke 8:4–15.
25. Quoted from D. W. Lang, *The Wisdom of Balahar*, New York, 1957, p.37.
26. In recent years the tomb has been renovated and altered a number of times. This has probably led to modification also of the surrounding structures in some way, but because Kashmir has been out of bounds since 1989 (due to continuing unrest and guerrilla activity), there is no reliable information about the present condition of the tomb. A portion of the grille was sold to a visitor in 1989, and is now in my possession.
27. According to Aziz Kashmiri, editor of the journal *Roshni* published in Srinagar, the footprints were discovered in 1958 by a Mrs Ketkar, the daughter of Lord Kitchener's adjutant.
28. Quoted from M. Yasin, *Mysteries of Kashmir*, Srinagar, 1972.

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Publisher's Note

Jesus in India is the English version of *Masih Hindustan Mein,* an Urdu treatise written by the Holy Founder of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, Hadhrat Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (1835-1908), the Promised Messiah and Mahdi. The main thesis expounded in this treatise is Jesus' deliverance from death on the Cross and his subsequent journey to India in quest of the lost tribes of Israel whom he had to gather into his fold as foretold by Jesus himself.

Starting his journey from Jerusalem and passing through Nasibus and Iran, Jesus is shown to have reached Afghanistan where he met the Jews who had settled there after their escape from the bonds of Nebuchadnezzar. From Afghanistan Jesus went to Kashmir where some Israelite tribes had also settled. He made this place his home and here he died and lies buried in Srinagar, Kashmir.

In this book, Hadhrat Ahmad has solved another difficult problem which has for long confounded many a western writer, namely the problem of the resemblance between Christian and Buddhistic teachings and also between the life of Jesus and that of Buddha, as recorded in their respective Scriptures. Some of these writers hold that Buddhistic teachings must somehow have reached Palestine and were incorporated by Jesus in his own sermons. But there is absolutely no historical evidence to support this theory. A Russian traveller named Nicolas Notovitch stayed for quite some time with Lamas in Tibet and had their religious chronicles translated for him. He is of the opinion that Jesus must

have been to Tibet before the Crucifixion and gone back to Palestine after having imbibed Buddhistic teachings.

Rejecting both these views, Hadhrat Ahmad proves that Jesus came to India only after the Crucifixion and not before, and that it was not he who borrowed Buddha's teachings but the Buddhists who seem to have reproduced the Gospels in their books. Jesus also visited Tibet during his travels in India in search of the lost tribes of Israel. He preached his message to Buddhist monks, some of whom were originally Jews. They were deeply impressed by Jesus' teachings and accepted him as the manifestation of the Buddha, the Promised Teacher. With faith in him as their Master, they incorporated his teachings into the teachings of the Buddha himself.

Masih Hindustan Mein, was—it still is—an epoch-making and cataclysmic book. It transformed the theological landscape of Judaism, Pauline Christianity and conventional Islam. The catalyst it introduced was that Jesus—a true prophet of God that he was, was saved from death on the cross, lived long and lies buried in Srinagar Kashmir.

As stated in the Introduction and at the end, the book was to be divided into two parts, the first to comprise as many as ten chapters plus an epilogue, and the second part to contain additional proofs of Jesus' journey to India and a comparative evaluation of the teachings of Islam and Christianity establishing the truth of Islam as well as of his own claim to be the Promised Messiah. It seems he couldn't find time for further research on this subject, but he made good his resolve by ushering in a spiritual rebirth of Islam in its pristine purity, founding the dynamic Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat worldwide and writing not one but more than eighty books concerning

the truth of Islam, his own claim as the Promised Messiah and Mahdi and the life and death of Jesus.

Written in 1899, and partly serialized in *Review of Religions* in 1902 and 1903, the book itself was posthumously published on 20th November 1908. The first English translation, by the late Qazi Abdul Hamid, was published in 1944. On instructions from Hadhrat Mirza Tahir Ahmad, Khalifat-ul-Masih IV, Imam of the worldwide Ahmadiyya Muslim Jamaat, the present edition has been thoroughly revised by Professor Muhammad Ali Chaudhry, Wakilut Tasnif, Rabwah.

As supporting evidence of the theses advanced in this book, relevant excerpts from different authors and researchers are given at the end as appendix. These excerpts do not form part of the original text which, in the course of translation, has been kept inviolate and even misprints, if any, have not been corrected. The correct version has, however, been given in footnotes only after permission by our august Imam, Hadhrat Khalifa-tul-Masih IV. The author's footnotes are indicated by asterisks, while the translator's footnotes have been numbered 1,2,3, etc.

Since different editions of the Bible differ in the serial numbers of verses, care has been taken to stick to the numbers quoted by the author. Biblical references have been quoted from the Authorized King James' Version, published by the Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49530, USA.

THE PUBLISHERS

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We are also deeply grateful to Maulana Munir-ud-Din Shams, Additional Wakilut Tasnif, London and Mr. Arshad Ahmadi for scrutinizing and correcting the proofs, particularly Maulana Shams for his continued interest and useful suggestions. We are also grateful to Mr. Munwwar Saeed for preparing the index, and to the Arabic Desk in London, headed by Maulana Abdul Momin Tahir, for updating the Appendix.

Chaudhry Muhammad Ali
Wakilut Tasnif
Rabwah

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ[1]

نَحْمَدُهٗ وَ نُصَلِّی عَلٰی رَسُوْلِهِ الْكَرِيْمِ[2]

رَبَّنَا افْتَحْ بَيْنَنَا وَ بَيْنَ قَوْمِنَا بِالْحَقِّ وَ اَنْتَ خَيْرُ الْفَاتِحِيْنَ

Our Lord! Decide between us and our people in truth;
For You are the One Who decides best.

Introduction

I have written this book so that by adducing proofs from established facts, conclusive historical evidence of proven value, and ancient documents of other nations, I might dispel the serious misconceptions which are current among Christians and most Muslim sects regarding the earlier and the later life of Jesus. The dangerous consequences of these misconceptions have not only hijacked and destroyed the concept of *Tauhid*—Divine Unity, but their insidious and poisonous influence has long been noticed in the moral condition of Muslims in this country. It is these baseless myths and tales that result in spiritual maladies, like immorality, malice, callousness, and cruelty, which are almost endemic among most Islamic sects. Virtues like human sympathy, compassion, affability, love of justice, meekness, modesty, and humility are disappearing by the day, as if they will soon bid a hasty farewell to them. This

---

[1] In the name of Allah, the Gracious, the Merciful. [Translator]

[2] We praise Allah and invoke His blessings upon His noble Prophet[sa]. [Translator]

callousness and moral degradation makes many a Muslim appear only marginally different from wild beasts. A Jain[3] or a Buddhist is afraid of killing even a mosquito or a flea and detests such an act, but alas! there are many among Muslims who would kill an innocent person with impunity and commit wanton murder without the least fear of God Almighty Who rates human life higher than all other animals. Why then this callousness, cruelty, and lack of sympathy? It is because from their very childhood, myths and false stories regarding a false concept of Jihad are drummed into their ears and instilled into their hearts. As a result, they gradually become morally dead and cease to realize the heinousness of such abominable deeds. On the other hand, a man who murders an unsuspecting person and brings ruin to his family, thinks that he has done a meritorious and rightful deed and made the most of an opportunity to win social acclaim. This is because no sermons or lectures are delivered in our country to discourage such evils, and if at all there are any such sermons, they have an aura of hypocrisy about them; and the man in the street continues to think approvingly of such misdeeds. Hence, taking pity upon the plight of my people, I have already written books in Urdu, Persian and Arabic, in which I have proved that the popular concept of Jihad prevalent among Muslims, such as the expectation of a bloodthirsty Imam and cultivation of malice for others, are no more than false notions harboured by shortsighted clerics. Islam, on the contrary, does not allow the use of the

[3] Jainism is a religion of Indian origin which forbids harming any living creatures, whether humans, animals or insects. (Translator)

sword in religion except in the case of defensive wars, wars which are waged to punish a tyrant, or those which are meant to uphold freedom. The need of a defensive war arises only when the aggression of an adversary threatens one's life. Except for these three kinds of Jihad permitted by the *Shariah*—Islamic law, no other kind of war is allowed by Islam in support of religion. To highlight this concept of Jihad, I have distributed books in this country and in Arabia, Syria and Khurasan, etc., at great cost. But now, by the grace of God, I have adduced arguments powerful enough to dispel these unfounded beliefs from the people's minds. I have found clear proofs and strong and conclusive circumstantial and historical evidence, the light of whose truth gives the tiding that, soon after their publication, there will come about a welcome change in the hearts of the Muslims. I am sure that after these truths have been comprehended, sweet and refreshing springs of modesty, humility and compassion will gush forth from the hearts of the righteous sons of Islam. There will be a spiritual transformation which will have a wholesome and benign impact on the nation at large. I am also sure that Christian scholars and all those who hunger and thirst after the truth, will benefit from this book. And, as I have just pointed out, the real object of this book is to correct the wrong beliefs which have found their way into the creeds of the Muslims and the Christians. However, this requires some elaboration which is as follows.

Christians and most Muslims believe that Jesus was raised to the heavens alive; both have believed for a long time that Jesus is still alive in the heavens and will return to the earth sometime in the latter days. The difference in the

views of Muslims and Christians is that Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross, was resurrected, went to heaven in his earthly body, seated himself on the right hand of his Father and will return to the earth for judgment in the latter days. They further say that Jesus, the Messiah, is the Creator and Master of the world and none other; he it is who, in the latter days, will descend to the earth in glory and majesty to pronounce reward and punishment. All those who do not believe in him or his mother as God, will be caught and thrown into hell, where crying and lamenting will be their lot. But the aforesaid sects of Muslims say that Jesus was never crucified, nor did he die on the cross. Instead, when the Jews arrested him for crucifixion, an angel of God took him to the heavens in his earthly body, and that he is still alive there, which according to them is the second heaven, where the prophet Yahya or John is also quartered. Muslims, moreover, believe that Jesus is an exalted prophet of God but not God, nor the Son of God. They also say that he will, in the latter days, descend to the earth, near the Minaret at Damascus, or elsewhere, supported by two angels. Jesus and Imam Muhammad—the Mahdi, who will be a Fatamite and will already be there in this world—will kill all non-Muslims, and will not spare anyone except those who become Muslims at once. In short, the real object of the second coming of Jesus to the earth, as stated by the Muslims known as Ahl-e-Sunnah and Ahl-e-Hadith, also called Wahabis by the common people, is that quite like the Mahadev[4] of the Hindus, he will destroy the whole world; and that he will first threaten people to

[4] One of the three great Hindu gods. (Translator)

become Muslims and, if they persist in their disbelief, shall put them all to the sword. They also affirm that he has been kept alive in the heavens in his earthly body, so that when Muslim powers become weak, he will come down and kill the non-Muslims or coerce them on pain of death to become Muslims. The divines of the aforesaid Muslim sect say, particularly about the Christians, that when Jesus comes down from the heavens, he will break all the crosses in the world, indulge in all sorts of cruel deeds with the sword, and fill the earth with blood. And, as stated before, the Ahl-e-Hadith and others from among the Muslims gleefully proclaim that shortly before the second coming of the Messiah, there will appear an Imam from among the descendants of Fatima[rz], whose name will be Muhammad, the Mahdi. He it is who will be the Khalifa and King of the time by virtue of his being one of the Quraish. Since his real object will be to kill all non-Muslims except those who readily recite the Kalima, Jesus will come down to give him a helping hand in this task; and although Jesus in his own right will be a Mahdi, indeed he will be the greater Mahdi, but since it is essential that the Khalifa of the time should be from among the Quraish, Jesus will not be the Khalifa. Instead, Muhammad, the Mahdi, will be the Khalifa. They further allege that the two of them together will fill the earth with human blood, and so much blood will be shed that it will be unprecedented in the history of the world. The moment they appear, they will start this bloody carnage, but they will neither preach nor plead, nor show any sign. They also say that although Jesus will be like an advisor or a helper to Imam Muhammad, the Mahdi, and although the reins of power will be in the hands of the Mahdi alone, Jesus

will continue to instigate and incite Hadhrat Imam Muhammad, the Mahdi, to violence, as if he were trying to make up for the humane teaching he preached to the world before, i.e., not to resist evil, and on being struck on one cheek, to turn the other cheek also.

This, in sum, is the Muslim and Christian belief regarding Jesus. Although Christians are guilty of a grave error in calling a humble man God, some Muslims too, particularly the Ahl-e-Hadith, generally known as the Wahabis, believe in a bloodthirsty Mahdi and an equally bloodthirsty Messiah. This has corrupted their moral condition to the extent that neither can they live with other people in a climate of peace, trust, and good will, nor can they be truly and completely loyal to a non-Muslim government. Every reasonable man would understand that such a belief, namely, that non-Muslims should be subjected to coercion, and that they should either directly become Muslims or be put to death, is open to very serious objections. Human conscience spontaneously realizes that it is highly objectionable to convert a person to one's faith by coercion, and by threatening to kill him, without ever giving him the opportunity to understand the truth of a faith and apprising him of its moral teaching and values. Far from contributing to the growth of a religion, this would give the opponents the opportunity to find fault with it. The ultimate result of this kind of thinking is that hearts become devoid of human sympathy. Justice and compassion, which are some of the cardinal human values, become extinct, and spite and ill will begin to flourish; only brutality remains, wiping out all high moral qualities. But it is only too obvious that such teachings cannot be from God, Who

punishes only after His message has been fully communicated.

Just imagine, would it be reasonable to simply kill a man if he does not accept the true faith, even though he is as yet ignorant and unaware of its truth and its noble and excellent message? Instead of answering his denial with the sword or the gun, such a man deserves compassion, and needs to be instructed gently and politely in the truth, beauty and the spiritual excellence of the faith. Hence, the view of Jihad held by these sects of Islam, and their belief that the time is near when there will arise a bloodthirsty Mahdi named Imam Muhammad, that the Messiah will come down from the skies to lend him a helping hand, and that the two of them together will kill all non-Muslims if they deny Islam, is utterly opposed to moral sense. Doesn't this belief put all good human qualities and morals out of action, and excite beastly passions. Those who hold such beliefs have to lead a life of hypocrisy with others, so much so that they cannot even give true loyalty to their rulers. The allegiance they profess is a lie. That is why some of the Ahl-e-Hadith sects mentioned above are living a double life under the British Government in India. In secret, they hold out hopes to the common people of the coming of the bloody days of a bloodthirsty Mahdi and Messiah, and preach accordingly, but to the rulers they go as sycophants, assuring them that they do not approve of such ideas. But if they are really sincere, why do they not express their disapproval in their writings, and why do they await the coming of the bloodthirsty Mahdi and Messiah so impatiently as if they were standing at the doorstep, eager to join him?

It is because of such beliefs that the moral fiber of these clerics has suffered so much deterioration. They are no longer capable of preaching peace and compassion. On the other hand, they consider it their prime religious duty to go about killing others. I would be glad if any sect of the Ahl-e-Hadith is opposed to these beliefs, but I cannot help observing with regret that among the sects of the Ahl-e-Hadith* there are Wahabis incognito who believe in a bloodthirsty Mahdi and in the common concept of Jihad. They believe what is contrary to the true faith, and, if the opportunity offers, they consider it virtuous to kill people who profess other religions. Whereas the truth is that belief in killing others in the name of Islam, or in prophecies like the one about the bloodthirsty Messiah or wishing to advance the cause of Islam by bloodshed and threats, is absolutely against the Holy Quran and authentic *Ahadith*. Our Holy Prophet[sa] suffered great hardship in Mecca and thereafter at the hands of the disbelievers. The thirteen years which he spent at Mecca were years of great affliction and suffering. Even to think of them brings tears to one's eyes. But he did not raise the sword against his enemies, nor did he reply in kind to their abuse, until many of his disciples and close friends were mercilessly killed, and he was himself subjected to all kinds of persecution. He was poisoned many a time; and many an unsuccessful attempt

* Some of the Ahl-e-Hadith write in their books unjustly and with great impertinence that the birth of the Mahdi is imminent: that he will put the British rulers of India behind the bars, and that the Christian king will be brought before him as prisoner. Such books are still extant in Ahl-e-Hadith homes. *Iqtiraab-us-Sa'ah* is one of these books, whose author is a well-known Ahl-e-Hadith scholar. Vide page 64 of this book. (Author)

was made to murder him. When, however, God's vengeance came, it so happened that the Meccan and tribal chiefs decided unanimously that this man, the Holy Prophet[sa], should at all events be put to death. It was at that time that God, who is the Supporter of His loved ones and of the truthful and the righteous, informed him that nothing but evil was left in the town, that the people were bent upon murdering him and that he should leave the town at once. Then in response to divine command, he migrated to Medina. Even there, his enemies did not leave him alone; they pursued him, and tried at all costs to annihilate Islam. When their arrogance exceeded all limits, and their crime of killing innocent people had made them only too fit to be punished, Muslims were given the permission to fight in self-defense. And those people and their helpers did deserve punishment for killing many innocent persons and robbing them of their possessions, not in any fair fight or battle, but out of sheer mischief. But in spite of all this, when Mecca was taken, our Holy Prophet[sa] pardoned them all. It is, therefore, utterly wrong and unfair to suppose that the Holy Prophet[sa] or his companions ever fought to spread Islam, or forced anyone to join its fold.

Remember, at the time all nations were highly prejudiced against Islam. The enemy was scheming to destroy Islam which he thought was a new religion and the followers of which were only a negligible minority, and everyone was anxious to see the Muslims destroyed at the earliest, or too torn apart to have any possibility of growth. This is why the Muslims had to encounter hostility at every step, and anyone from any tribe who accepted Islam was either summarily killed by his tribe or lived in perpetual danger of

losing his life. At this juncture, God Almighty took pity on Muslim converts, and imposed on the bigoted powers the penalty of becoming subjects of the Islamic state, thereby throwing open the doors of freedom for Islam. This was meant to remove the obstructions in the way of those who wished to accept the faith; it was God's mercy upon mankind, and did no one any harm.

It is evident, however, that non-Muslim rulers today do not interfere with the religious freedom of Muslims; they do not restrict the carrying out of religious rites; do not kill new converts to Islam from among their own people and do not put them into prison or torture them. Why then should Islam permit the use of the sword against them? For a fact, Islam has never advocated compulsion in religion. If you closely study the Holy Quran, books of *Hadith* and historical records, and examine them and reflect upon them as far as possible, you will realize that the charge that Islam ever used force and wielded the sword to spread the faith is an utterly unfounded and shameless allegation. Such charges are levelled against Islam by people who have not been able to read the Quran, *Hadith* and the authentic chronicles in an objective and impartial spirit, and have made free use of slander and falsehood. I know the time is approaching fast when those who are hungry and thirsty for truth will come to know of the reality of these slanderous charges. How can we describe Islam as a religion of compulsion, when its Holy Book, the Holy Quran, unequivocally commands:

لَآ إِكْرَاهَ فِي الدِّينِ[5]

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[5] 2 : 257 (Translator)

This means that you are simply not allowed to convert people by force. Can we ever accuse the great Prophet Muhammad[sa] of using force, while, for thirteen long years of his Meccan life, he continued to exhort his companions not to return evil for evil, but to forbear and forgive? When mischief exceeded all limits, and everyone joined hands to try to obliterate Islam, God's wrath required that those who kill by the sword should be killed by the sword. Except for this, the Holy Quran does not at all approve of compulsion. Were it so, the companions of our Holy Prophet[sa], in moments of trial, would not have succeeded in proving their sincerity as true believers. While the loyalty of the companions of our Master, the Holy Prophet[sa], is a matter upon which I hardly need to dwell, it is no secret that the examples of upholding the truth and loyalty displayed by the disciples are unparalleled in the history of other nations. This band of the faithful did not waver in their loyalty and steadfastness even under the shadow of the sword. The unrelenting steadfastness they exhibited in the company of the Holy Prophet[sa] is not humanly possible unless one's heart is lit up with the light of genuine belief. In short, there is no room for compulsion in Islam. Wars in Islam fall under three categories:

i. Defensive war—war by way of self-protection;
ii. Punitive war—blood for blood;
iii. War to establish freedom—to break the hold of those who kill converts to Islam.

Whereas Islam does not permit that anyone should be converted by force or by threat to one's life, it is simply absurd to await the appearance of a bloodthirsty Mahdi and

Messiah. It is impossible that, contrary to the teaching of the Holy Quran, someone should appear and convert people to Islam by force. Now, this was not something that defied comprehension or was too difficult to understand. Only the ignorant have been led to this belief because of selfishness. Most of our clerics happen to labour under the delusion that wars waged by the Mahdi will bring great wealth, so much so, that they will not be able to handle it. Since most of the Maulvis or Muslim clerics today are so hard up, they are eagerly waiting for the Mahdi to appear, who, they think, will satisfy their baser appetites. Little wonder, therefore, if these people turn against anyone who does not believe in the appearance of such a Mahdi. Such a person is at once denounced as an apostate, and outside the pale of Islam. For these very reasons I too am an apostate in their eyes, since I do not believe in the coming of a bloodthirsty Mahdi and Messiah and I detest such absurd beliefs. But this is not the only reason why they denounce me as an apostate. Of course, I do not believe in the coming of an imaginary Messiah and Mahdi. But there is also an added reason, which is that I have publicly proclaimed that God has revealed to me that the real Promised Messiah who is also the Mahdi, tidings of whose appearance are to be found in the Bible and the Holy Quran and whose coming is also promised in the *Ahadith* is none other than myself. However, I have come without a sword or a gun; God has commanded me that with meek and gentle humility and peace I should invite people to God Who is True, Eternal and Immutable and is the Most Holy, All-Knowing, Ever-Merciful, and Just.

I alone am the light of this age of darkness. He who

follows me will be saved from falling into the pits prepared by the Devil for those who walk in the dark. I have been sent by God to lead the world in humility and peace to the True God, and to re-establish the reign of moral values in Islam. God has provided me with heavenly signs for the satisfaction of seekers after truth, and has shown miracles in my support. He has disclosed to me secrets of the unseen and of the future which, according to the Scriptures are the real criteria for judging and identifying the true claimant to this divine office. He has vouchsafed to me true Knowledge and comprehension of verities. That is why, souls which hate truth and love darkness have turned against me. But it was my desire to be kind and forgiving towards mankind, as far as it lay in my power. Hence, in this age the greatest sympathy one can show to the Christians is to draw their attention to the True God Who transcends the traumas of birth, death, pain and suffering. He created all primordial matter and particles in spherical shapes, and thus signed this inherent message in nature that, like every sphere, His own being is One. He is not subject to any dimensions. None of the expansive bodies have been created triangular. All the things God created in the beginning, the earth, the heavens, the sun and the moon, the stars, the elements, are all spherical in shape; this denotes Unity and Oneness of the Creator. Hence there can be no truer sympathy and love for the Christians than that their attention should be invited towards the God Whose handiwork absolves Him of the taint of trinity.

The one good service one could do to the Muslims would be to reform their moral condition. Efforts should be made to dispel the false hopes which they entertain in connection

with the appearance of a bloodthirsty Mahdi and Messiah. Such expectations are entirely against the teachings of Islam. I have just said that the ideas of some of the present day Muslim clerics that there will appear a bloodthirsty Mahdi, who will spread Islam at the point of the sword, are contrary to the Quranic teachings and are only the result of wishful thinking. For a right-minded and truth-loving Muslim to shed such beliefs, it should be enough that he study the Holy Quran closely, pause, consider and see that the Holy Word of God is very much against threatening to kill people if they fail to become Muslims. This one argument alone is sufficient to refute such false notions. Nevertheless, out of a feeling of sympathy, I have decided to refute the aforesaid misconceptions by clear and positive proofs from history and other sources. Hence, I shall try to prove in this book that Jesus did not die on the cross, nor did he go up to the heavens; nor should it be supposed that he would ever again come down to the earth. On the contrary, the fact of the matter is that he died at the age of 120 years at Srinagar, Kashmir, where his tomb is still to be found in the Khan Yar quarter. To prove this point, I have divided this enquiry into ten chapters and an epilogue, which are as follows:

1. Testimonies from the Gospels.
2. Testimonies from the Holy Quran and the *Ahadith*.
3. Testimonies from medical literature.
4. Testimonies from historical records.
5. Testimonies from oral traditions which have been handed down from generation to generation.
6. Testimonies from miscellaneous circumstantial evidence.

7. Testimonies from logical argument.
8. Testimonies from the fresh revelation I have received from God.

These constitute eight chapters. In chapter 9, there will be a brief comparison between Christianity and Islam, setting out arguments in favour of the latter. In chapter 10, there will be a somewhat detailed account of the aims and objectives which I have been divinely commissioned to realize. This will include evidence to prove that I am the Promised Messiah and that I have been sent by God. At the end, there is an epilogue in which I have set forth some important guidelines.

I trust that those who read this book will do so carefully, and will not reject, out of prejudice, the truth contained in it. I should like to remind that this is not a cursory and passing investigation; the proofs contained in this book have been made available after a deep and searching inquiry. I pray to God that He may help me in this undertaking and lead me by His special revelation and inspiration to the perfect Light of truth, for all true knowledge and clear perception descend from Him, and only with His leave can it guide human hearts to truth. Amen!

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD,
Qadian
25th April 1899.

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

Chapter One

Christians believe that Jesus was arrested and crucified, owing to his betrayal by Judas Iscariot, was later resurrected, and raised to heaven. A detailed study of the Gospel, however, disproves this notion altogether. It is written in Matthew chapter 12 verse 40:

> ***For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.***

Now it is obvious that Jonah did not die in the belly of the whale; all that happened was that he went into a swoon or a coma. The holy books of God bear witness that Jonah, by the grace of God, remained in the belly of the whale alive, came out alive, and his people ultimately accepted him. If then Jesus had died in the belly of the whale,[6] what resemblance could there be between the dead and the living, and vice versa? The truth is, that Jesus was a true prophet and he knew that God, who loved him, would save him from an accursed death. Therefore, on the basis of divine revelation, he prophesied in the form of a parable, and positively intimated that he would not die on the cross, nor would he give up his ghost on the accursed wood; on the contrary, like the prophet Jonah, he would only be in a state of swoon. In the parable, he had also hinted that he

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[6] This is a misprint in the first edition, the word 'whale' should be read 'earth'. [Translator]

would come out of the bowels of the earth and join his people and would be honoured like Jonah. This prophecy was also fulfilled; for Jesus came out of the bowels of the earth and went to his tribes who lived in the eastern countries like Kashmir and Tibet. These were the ten tribes of the Israelites who 721 years* before Jesus, had been taken captive and forced to leave Samaria by Shalmaneser, King of Assur. They eventually came to India and settled in various parts of the country. Jesus had to make this journey, for the divine object underlying his mission was to meet the lost tribes of Israel who had settled in different parts of India. This was because these were the lost sheep of Israel who had renounced their ancestral faith after settling in these parts, and most of them had become Buddhists, and gradually started worshipping idols. Dr. Bernier, on the authority of a number of eminent scholars, states in his *Travels* that the Kashmiris in reality are the Jews who had migrated to this country during the political turmoil in the days of the king of Assur.**[7] In any case, it was incumbent upon Jesus to find out the whereabouts of the lost sheep, who had got mixed with the local people after coming to India. I shall presently produce evidence to prove that Jesus did in fact come to India and then, by stages, travelled to Kashmir, and discovered the lost sheep of Israel among Buddhists, who ultimately accepted him the way Jonah was accepted by his people. This was inevitable, for Jesus himself said in so many words that he had been sent to the

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* Besides these, more Jews were exiled to eastern countries as a result of Babylonian excesses. (Author)

** See Volume II of *Travels* by the Frenchman Dr. Bernier. (Author)

[7] See Appendix extract 10. (Translator)

lost sheep of Israel.

Otherwise too, he must needs have escaped death on the cross, for it was stated in the Holy Book that whoever was hanged on the cross was accursed. The term 'accursed' has a connotation which it would be cruel and unfair to apply to a chosen one of God like Jesus, for, according to the agreed view of all whose mother tongue is Arabic, *la'nat*, or curse, has reference to the state of one's heart. A man is said to be accursed when his heart, having been estranged from God, becomes dark; when, deprived of divine mercy and of divine love, devoid absolutely of His knowledge, blind and deaf like Satan, he is saturated with the poison of unbelief; when there remains not a ray of divine love and knowledge in him; when the bonds of love and loyalty are broken, and, between him and God, mutual hatred and disdain and spite and hostility take root, so much so that they become enemies; and God becomes weary of him and he becomes weary of God; in short, he becomes an heir to all the attributes of the Devil. That is why the Devil himself is called the accursed.*

The connotation of the word 'accursed' is so foul and unclean that it can never apply to a righteous person who entertains the love of God in his heart. It is a pity that Christians did not consider the significance of curse when they invented this belief; otherwise, they could never have used such a degrading word for a righteous man like Jesus. Can we ever possibly imagine that Jesus' heart was estranged from God; that he had denied His existence,

* Vide the lexicons: Lisaan-ul-Arab, Sihah Jauhari, Qaamus, Muhit, Taj-ul-Urus, etc. (Author)

hated Him and had become His enemy? Can we ever imagine that Jesus ever felt in his heart of hearts that he was alienated from God, that he was an enemy of God, and that he was totally lost in the darkness of unbelief and denial? But while Jesus never experienced such feelings and his heart was always full of the light of Divine love and knowledge, then, my worthy intellectuals, how can we ever say that not one, but thousands of curses descended upon Jesus with all their evil significance! God forbid, this could never be. How then can we believe that Jesus was accursed? What a pity, that once a man has expressed an opinion or taken his stand on a certain doctrine, he is ill-inclined to turn back from it, even if all its ills are exposed before him. It is praiseworthy indeed to seek salvation if it is based on authentic reality, but where is the sense in a desire for salvation which kills truth and countenances the belief regarding a holy prophet and perfect man, that he passed through a state in which he was totally estranged from God, and instead of unreserved and single-minded submission, there appeared in him a strangeness and alienation, even enmity and hatred, and that darkness filled his heart in place of light?

Remember, this kind of thinking not only detracts from the dignity of the prophethood of Jesus but is also derogatory to his claim to spiritual eminence, holiness, love, and knowledge of God, to which he gives repeated expression in the Gospels. Just look it up in the New Testament where Jesus claims that he is the Light and the Guide of the world, that he has a relationship of great love with God, that he has been blessed with a pure birth and that he is the beloved son of God. How then, in spite of

these pure and holy ties, can the unholy attributes of a curse be ascribed to Jesus? No, this can never be so. There cannot be the least doubt therefore that Jesus was not crucified, and did not die on the cross, for his person did not deserve the stigma of death on the cross. Not having been crucified, he was also spared the unclean consequence of the curse, and this no doubt proves that he did not physically go to heaven. Since ascension was a constituent part of the whole scheme and a corollary of crucifixion, it necessarily follows that as he was neither accursed nor did he go to hell for three days, nor for that matter did he die on the cross, the second part of the scheme, namely, that of ascension, also stands nullified. The Gospels contain even more evidence on this, which I proceed to set below. One of these is the following statement of Jesus:

> ***But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee. (Matthew 26: 32)***

This verse clearly shows that Jesus, after he had come out of the sepulchre, went to Galilee and not to heaven. His words 'After I am risen' do not mean coming to life after being dead; rather, Jesus used these words in anticipation of what the people were going to say in the future, because as it turned out, they thought he had died on the cross. And indeed, if a man is put on the cross, with nails driven into his hands and feet, and he faints away for all his suffering, looking more dead than alive; if such a man is saved from his ordeal and recovers his senses, it would hardly be an exaggeration on his part to say that he had come to life again. No doubt, Jesus' escape from such a predicament was no less than a miracle. There is no doubt that after so much suffering, Jesus' escape from death was a miracle, but it

would be wrong to say that Jesus had actually died. True, words to this effect are of course found in the Gospels, but this is only the kind of mistake which the evangelists have also made in the recording of several other historical events. In the light of their research, commentators of the Gospels admit that the books of the New Testament can be divided into two parts:

i. The religious teaching which the disciples received from Jesus; this constitutes the essence of the teachings of the Gospel.

ii. Historical events, like the genealogy of Jesus, his arrest and his being beaten; the existence at the time of a miraculous pond, etc., were recorded by the writers on their own authority. They were not revelations but were written down according to the writers' own perceptions. At places, we find gross exaggerations, for instance, it is stated that if all the miracles and works of Jesus were put into writing, the world would not be big enough to accommodate them. What a hyperbole!

On the other hand, it would be quite in keeping with common parlance to describe as death the traumatic shock suffered by Jesus. This kind of expression is almost universal. Whenever a man escapes from such a near-fatal experience, without any hesitation he is considered to have been given 'a new life'.

One thing more worth attention is that in the Gospel of Barnabas, which should be available in the London library, it is written that he was not put on the cross, nor did he die thereupon. We could very well point out that though this book is not included in the Gospels and has been rejected

summarily, but there is no doubt that it is an ancient book, and was written at the same time as the other Gospels. Can't we, therefore, view this book as an ancient chronicle and make use of it as an historical document? And can't we conclude from this book that at the time when the event of the cross took place, people were not unanimous as to Jesus having died on the cross? Apart from this, the four Gospels themselves use metaphors describing a dead person as being asleep. It is not far from the point to suppose that coma has been described as death. As I have already mentioned, a prophet never lies. Jesus compared his three days' stay in the tomb to the three days Jonah spent in the belly of the whale. This only shows that just as Jonah remained alive in the belly of the whale for three days, Jesus must also have been alive in the tomb for three days. It must be remembered here that the Jewish tombs in those days were not like the present-day tombs; they were spacious like a room and had an opening at one end covered with a big stone. I shall prove in due course that Jesus' tomb, which has been recently discovered in Srinagar in Kashmir, is exactly similar to the one in which Jesus was placed in a state of swoon.

In short, the verse I have just quoted shows that Jesus, after coming out of the sepulchre, went to Galilee. It is written in the Gospel of Mark that after coming out of the sepulchre, Jesus was seen on the road to Galilee, and in due course he met the eleven disciples who were at their meal; he showed them his hands and feet which bore wounds; they thought that he was perhaps a spirit. Then he said to them: 'It is I myself; touch me and see for a spirit has no flesh and bones as I have.' Then he took a piece of broiled

fish, and of an honeycomb and ate it before them. See Mark 16:14 and Luke 24:39-42.[8]

These verses show that it is certain that Jesus never went to the heavens; rather, he came out of the sepulchre and went to Galilee like a common man, in ordinary clothes and a human body. If he had been resurrected after death, how was it that his spiritual body could still have borne the wounds inflicted upon him on the cross? What need had he to eat? And if he required food then he must be in need of food even now!

Readers should know better than to think that the Jewish cross was like the present day gallows, from which deliverance is almost an impossibility. In those days, no noose was secured around the neck of the victim, nor was the wooden plank pulled from under him to keep him hanging. Instead, the victim was put on the cross, his hands and feet were nailed to it; and there was always the possibility that after he was put on the cross and duly nailed, he could still be taken down alive after a day or two, before his bones had been broken, in case it was decided to

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[8] "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen." – Mark 16:14
"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace *be* unto you. But they were terrified and affrightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them *his* hands and *his* feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took *it*, and did eat before them." – Luke 24:36-43 (Translator)

spare his life, the punishment already undergone being considered sufficient. If he was meant to be killed, he was kept on the cross, was denied food and water and left in this condition under the sun for at least three days, after which his bones were broken and he would expire under the torture. But by the grace of God Almighty, Jesus was spared the agony which would otherwise have meant certain death. A close scrutiny of the Gospels would reveal that neither did Jesus remain on the cross for three days, nor did he have to suffer hunger or thirst, nor were his bones broken. On the contrary, he remained on the cross only for about two hours, and it so happened, by the grace of the Almighty, that he was placed on the cross in the latter part of the day, which was a Friday, sometime before sunset, the next day being the Sabbath, the Jewish feast of Fasah. Now, according to Jewish custom, it was unlawful and a cognizable offence to let anyone remain on the cross on the Sabbath, or the night before. Jews, like Muslims, followed the lunar calendar, according to which the day began with the sunset. On the one hand was this welcome circumstance which was born of earthly causes, and, on the other, divine scheme intervened. When the sixth hour had struck, a severe dust storm began to blow which enveloped the world in darkness and persisted for at least three hours. See Mark 15:33. The sixth hour was after twelve o'clock and was close to evening. Now, the Jews got worried at the deep darkness and feared lest the night of the Sabbath should overtake them and lest, having violated the sanctity of the Sabbath, they should be deservedly punished. Therefore, they hurriedly removed Jesus and the two thieves from their crosses. In addition to this, there was another heavenly

intervention. When Pilate presided at his court, his wife sent word to him saying, Have nothing to do with that just man (don't seek to have him killed) for I have suffered many things in a dream because of him. See Matthew 27:19.[9] So, this angel, whom the wife of Pilate saw in her dream, would have us and all fair-minded people believe, that God had never intended for Jesus to die on the cross. Ever since creation, it has never happened that God should reveal to a person in a dream that a particular thing would happen in a certain way, and still that thing should fail to happen. For example, Matthew says that an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream and said:

> ***Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him. (Matthew 2:13)***

Can anyone imagine that Jesus could have been killed in Egypt? The dream of Pilate's wife was similarly a part of divine design, which could never fail in its objective. Just as the possibility of Jesus being put to death during the journey to Egypt was against the specific promise of God, so here too it is unthinkable that the angel of God should appear to Pilate's wife and point out to her that if Jesus died on the cross it would spell disaster for her, and yet the angel's appearance should go in vain, and Jesus should be allowed to suffer death on the cross. Is there any example of this in the world? None. The pure conscience of all good men, when informed of the dream of Pilate's wife, will no

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[9] "When he was set down on the Judgement seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." – Matthew 27:19 (Translator)

doubt testify that for a fact it was the purpose of the dream to lay the foundation for Jesus' rescue. On the other hand, everyone is free to reject a self-evident reality, out of sheer prejudice for his creed, but fairness would have us believe that the dream of Pilate's wife is a piece of weighty evidence in support of Jesus' escape from the cross. Matthew, the first and foremost of the Gospels, testifies to this. Although the powerful evidence which I shall set out in this book at once invalidates the divinity of Jesus and the doctrine of Atonement, yet honesty and fairness demand that we should pay no heed to our people, family, and conventional religion in accepting the truth. Since his creation, man, because he lacked true insight, has deified very many objects, so much so, that even cats and snakes have been worshipped. But the wiser among men, by the grace of God, have always managed to keep away from such polytheistic beliefs.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels, which testify to Jesus' escape from death on the cross, is the journey he undertook to a far-off place i.e. Galilee after coming out of the sepulchre. On Sunday morning, the first person he met was Mary Magdalene, who at once informed the disciples that Jesus was alive, but they did not believe her. Then he was seen by two of the disciples who were walking in the countryside; and finally he appeared to all the eleven while they were at their meal and remonstrated with them for their callousness and lack of faith. See Mark 16:9-14. Again, when the disciples were going towards the hamlet called Emmaus, 3.75 *kose*[10] from Jerusalem, Jesus joined them; and

[10] Different scales are used to measure distance in different parts of the

when they reached the hamlet, Jesus wanted to part company with them, but they insisted on his staying. He then dined with them, and they all spent the night with Jesus in Emmaus. See Luke 24:13-31. Now, it is absolutely impossible and irrational to say that Jesus ate and drank and slept and made a journey of about 70 *kose* to Galilee and performed all the functions of the physical body with a disembodied spirit—the spiritual form the human body assumes after death. Although many differences are found in the Gospels due to differing dispositions, they clearly prove that Jesus met his disciples in his mortal, physical body, and made a long journey on foot to Galilee. He showed his wounds to the disciples, had the evening meal with them, and slept in their company. We shall later on prove that he even treated his wounds with a special ointment.

Now, one has to consider, as to how it is possible that after a person has been invested a glorious and eternal frame, and exempted from the necessity of eating and drinking, is to sit on the right hand of God, and freed from all pain and deformity, he should still bear on his hands and feet fresh nail wounds which bleed and hurt, and an ointment has to be prepared to heal them? In other words, even after having an eternal body which should last forever without changing or deteriorating, Jesus was still suffering from a number of travails. He even showed his flesh and bones to his disciples; he was also prone to hunger and thirst, or it would serve no purpose to eat and drink and to

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world. According to the measurement mentioned by the Promised Messiah in this book, one *kose* is equal to 1.625 miles. (Translator)

rest during his journey. Food and water are indeed necessary for mortal bodies in this world, and their lack could prove fatal. Hence, there is no doubt that Jesus did not die on the cross, and did not acquire a new spiritual body: rather, he was in a state of coma which resembled death. And it so happened, by God's mercy, that the tomb in which he was placed was not like the tombs we have in this country; it was a large and ventilated room with an opening. It was a custom with the Jews in those days to build large sepulchers with an access; they were kept ready and when someone died, his body was placed there. We find a clear testimony of this in the Gospels. Luke says,

> ***Now upon the first day of the week very early in the morning, they (the women) came unto the sepulchre bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre and they entered in and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. (Luke 24:2-3)***[11]

Consider for a moment the words, *'they entered'*. Obviously, a man can only enter a tomb which is like a room and has an opening. I shall again state at its proper place in this book that the tomb of Jesus which has recently been discovered in Srinagar, Kashmir, also has an opening. This is a very special point and researchers can draw meaningful conclusions from it.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels are the words of Pilate, recorded by St. Mark:

> ***And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of***

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[11] This seems to be a misprint in the first edition. The correct reference is Luke 24:1-3. [Translator]

Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, who also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus. And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead. (Mark 16: 42-44)[12]

This shows that suspicion had risen at the very moment of crucifixion as to whether Jesus had actually died, and this suspicion was raised by a person who knew well enough how long it took for a person to die on the cross.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels are also the following verses:

The Jews, therefore, because it was the preparation, that the bodies should not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath day (for that Sabbath day was an high day), besought Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then came the soldiers and brake the legs of the first, and of the other which was crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was dead already they brake not his legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. (John 19:31-34)

These verses clearly show that in order to put an end to the life of a crucified person, it was the practice in those days to keep him on the cross for several days, and then to break his legs, but Jesus' legs were purposely not broken, and he was taken down alive from the cross, like the two thieves. That was the reason why blood gushed out when his side was pierced, whereas the blood of a dead man is congealed. This shows very clearly that there was some kind of a secret plan. Pilate was a God-fearing and good-

[12] This is a misprint in the first edition. The correct reference is Mark 15:42-44) [Translator]

hearted man; he could not openly show favour to Jesus for fear of Caesar because the Jews condemned Jesus as a rebel. All the same, Pilate was lucky to have beheld Jesus but Caesar was not so fortunate. Pilate not only saw Jesus but also showed him great favour. He did not at all desire that Jesus should suffer crucifixion. It is clear from the Gospels that Pilate resolved several times to let Jesus go, but the Jews threatened that if he did so, he would be disloyal to Caesar because, according to them, Jesus was a rebel who wanted to become king. (John 19:12)

Moreover, the dream which Pilate's wife saw, was also the prime mover to the effect that somehow or the other, Jesus should be saved from crucifixion, and that it would otherwise spell disaster. Since the Jews were a mischievous people, and were quite ready to report him to Caesar, Pilate used a subterfuge to release Jesus. First, he ordered Jesus' crucifixion in the expiring hours of a Friday, close to the night of Sabbath. Pilate was only too well aware that according to the Jewish law Jesus could only be kept on the cross until that evening, as the Sabbath would then begin and it would be unlawful to keep the bodies on the cross. It is unthinkable that the two thieves should be alive after two hours and Jesus should be dead; this was rather part of the design not to allow Jesus' bones to be broken. To a person with some common sense, it is indeed a reasonable point to ponder that the two thieves were taken down alive from their crosses. Indeed, it was normal practice that people were taken down alive from the cross and died only when their bones were broken or they breathed their last because of hunger and thirst after staying on the cross for a few days. But Jesus had to suffer none of these travails. Neither

was he kept on the cross hungry and thirsty for so many days, nor were his bones broken to put a stop to his life at once. It would be understandable if even one of the two thieves had died and there had been no need to break his bones.

Furthermore, Joseph, a close friend of Pilate's, who was a chief in those parts, and a secret disciple of Jesus, happened to arrive at this very moment. I presume that he too was summoned by Pilate. Jesus was declared dead and his body was placed in his custody. Since Joseph was a respected personality, the Jews could not quarrel with him. Thus, he took charge of Jesus, who had been declared dead whereas he was actually in a coma. Following Pilate's instructions, he took Jesus to a room with an opening which was used as a grave according to the prevailing custom of the time, and was beyond the access of the Jews.

All this took place in the midst of the 14th century after the demise of the prophet Moses, and the Messiah was the divine reformer who was to revive the Jewish faith in that century. Although the Jews themselves were awaiting the Messiah in the fourteenth century, and the prophecies of the earlier prophets testified to his coming, it is a pity that the Jews did not recognize the person and the time and denounced their Promised Messiah as an imposter. They called him an apostate, pronounced a verdict of death against him, and dragged him to court. This shows that the fourteenth century has the inherent quality of making people's hearts callous, and causing religious clerics to become blind and averse to the truth. A comparison between the fourteenth century after Moses and the

fourteenth century after the Holy Prophet[sa]—who is the similitude of Moses, will show, first, that in both of these centuries there was a man who claimed to be the Promised Messiah, and that it was a true claim, made on the authority of God Almighty. We also know that the religious leaders of the two peoples declared both of them to be apostates, denounced them as unbelievers and Anti-Christs, and pronounced verdicts of death against both. They were both taken to the courts; a Roman court in one case and a British court in the other. But in the end, they were both saved and the designs of both the Jewish and the Muslim clerics failed. God intended to raise great communities for both the Messiahs, and to defeat the designs of their enemies. In short, the fourteenth century after Moses and the fourteenth century after our Holy Prophet[sa], are both hard and trying and, in the long run, full of blessings for their respective Messiahs.

Among the testimonies which bear out that Jesus was indeed saved from the cross is the one narrated in Matthew 26:36-46. It relates that, having been informed by revelation of his impending arrest, Jesus prayed to God all night, crying and prostrating. These prayers, offered in such humility, for which Jesus was given ample time, could not have gone unaccepted. God never turns down the prayer of a chosen one when he prays in distress. How then could Jesus' prayer have been turned down, which he offered all night long in a state of anguish and distress, particularly when Jesus himself had announced that his Father in heaven listened to his prayers. How could we say that God listened to his prayers if this prayer offered in such distress was not accepted? The Gospels also show that Jesus was

certain that his prayer had been accepted and that he had great faith in his prayer. That is why when he was arrested and put on the cross, and found the circumstances contrary to his expectations, he involuntarily cried out: ایلی ایلی لما سبقتانی *'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani'*, that is to say *'My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken me?'*,[13] meaning, 'I did not expect things would come to this pass and that I would have to die on the cross. I was certain that God would listen to my prayers.' So, both these references of the Gospels show that Jesus firmly believed his prayer would be heard and accepted and his nightlong cries and supplications would not go in vain. In fact, he had himself taught his disciples, on divine authority, that if they prayed, their prayers would be accepted. He had also related the parable of the judge who feared neither God nor man, which was intended to convey to the disciples that God did indeed listen to prayers. Although Jesus had been apprised of the impending catastrophe, yet, like all righteous people, he prayed to God, believing that there was nothing impossible for Him and that everything that happened or did not happen was subject to God's will. Now if Jesus' own prayer was not accepted, God forbid, what an adverse effect this would have had on his disciples who had seen with their own eyes that the prayer of a great prophet like Jesus, addressed all night long with such burning passion, had not been accepted. Such an unfortunate example would have sorely tried their faith. God's mercy, therefore, desired that this prayer must be accepted; and the prayer offered at Gethsemane was indeed accepted.

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[13] See Matthew 27:46 (Translator)

There is another point to remember in this connection. Just as there was a conspiracy to kill Jesus, for which purpose the chief priests and the scribes assembled at the palace of the high priest called Caiphas and devised a plan to kill Jesus, so was there a conspiracy to murder Moses, and, likewise, the Holy Prophet[sa], for which there was a secret consultation in Mecca at a place called Dar-ul-Nadwa. But God Almighty saved both the great prophets from the evil consequences of these designs. The conspiracy against Jesus lies, in point of time, between the two conspiracies; why then was Jesus not saved, even when he had prayed so earnestly and in a much more dire situation? Why was Jesus' prayer not heard, when God hears the prayers of His beloved servants and frustrates the designs of the wicked? All righteous people know by experience that the prayer of the distressed and the afflicted is accepted. Indeed the hour of distress is the time for the righteous to show signs. I have had personal experience of this. Two years ago, a false charge of attempted murder was brought against me by Dr. Martin Clark, a Christian, who was a resident of Amritsar, Punjab. The case was filed in the district court, Gurdaspur, and it was alleged that I had sent a person named Abdul Hameed to murder the said doctor. It so happened that I was opposed in this case by several scheming persons belonging to the three communities, Christian, Hindu, and Muslim, who joined hands in trying to prove the charge of attempted murder. The Christians were against me because I was trying, and am still trying, to rescue humanity from the false notions which Christians entertain regarding Jesus; and this was the first taste of their ire. The Hindus were displeased with me because I had made a prophecy

regarding the death of Pundit Lekh Ram, with his consent, and the prophecy was fulfilled within the appointed time, which was indeed a terrible sign from God. Likewise, the Muslim clerics were angry because I was opposed to the idea of a bloodthirsty Messiah and to the doctrine of Jihad as understood by them. So, some important personages of these three communities counselled together to somehow prove the charge of murder against me, so that I should either be hanged or imprisoned. They were thus unjust in the sight of God. God had informed me of this long before their secret consultations, and had given me the tidings of my ultimate acquittal. These divine revelations were announced beforehand to hundreds of people; and when after the revelation, I prayed: 'Lord! Save me from this affliction,' it was revealed to me that God would save me and clear me of the charge brought against me. This revelation was verbally communicated to more than three hundred persons, many of whom are still alive. It so happened that my enemies produced false witnesses in the court, and very nearly 'proved' the case, witnesses of the three communities mentioned earlier having deposed against me. Then, it so happened, that the truth of the case was disclosed by God in a variety of ways to the magistrate before whom the case was pending. This magistrate was Captain W. Douglas, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurdaspur. He was convinced that the case was false. Then without caring for the doctor who was also a missionary, his sense of justice made him dismiss the case. Thus what I had announced about my acquittal on the authority of divine revelation to hundreds of people and in public meetings turned out to be true notwithstanding the mounting danger

of the attending circumstances. This served to fortify the faith of many people. This was not all. More charges of this kind and calumnies of a criminal character were preferred against me on the above grounds, and cases were taken to court, but before I could be summoned, God informed me of the origin and the end of each affair, and in every case howsoever alarming, I was given the glad tidings of acquittal in advance.

The point of this discourse is that God Almighty does indeed accept prayers especially when the oppressed knock on his door with implicit faith in Him; He attends to their plaints, and helps them in strange ways. To this, I myself am a witness. Why was it then that the prayer of Jesus uttered in such anguish was not accepted? But indeed, it was accepted, and God did save him. God caused things to happen on earth and in heaven to rescue him. John, i.e. the Prophet Yahya, had no time to pray for his end had arrived, but Jesus had a whole night to pray, and he spent it in supplication, standing and prostrating before God, for God had willed that he should give expression to his distress and pray to Him for Whom nothing was impossible. So the Lord, in keeping with His eternal practice, heard his prayer. The Jews lied when they taunted Jesus at the time of the crucifixion as to why God had not saved him despite his trust in Him? God frustrated all the designs of the Jews and saved His beloved Messiah from the cross and the attending curse. And the Jews had indeed failed.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels which have reached us are the following verses from Matthew:

> ***That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of***

Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation. (Matthew 23:35-36)

Now, if you think over these verses you will find that Jesus clearly says that the killing of prophets by the Jews ceased with the prophet Zacharias, and that after that, the Jews had no power to kill any prophet. This is a major prophecy which clearly points out that Jesus was not killed as a result of crucifixion; he was rather saved from the cross, dying ultimately a natural death. For if Jesus was also to suffer death at the hands of the Jews, like Zacharias, he would have hinted at it in these verses. If it is argued that Jesus was killed by the Jews but this was not a sin on the Jews' part, for Jesus' death was in the nature of an atonement, the contention is hardly tenable, for in John 19:11 Jesus says that the Jews have been guilty of a great sin for having resolved to kill him; and likewise in many other places there is the unmistakable hint that as a penalty for the crime of which they had been guilty against Jesus, they deserved punishment in the sight of God. See the Gospel[14] 26:24.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels which have reached us, is this verse in Matthew:

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom. (Matthew 16:28)

And this verse from John:

Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he (the disciple John) tarry (in Jerusalem) till I come. (John 21:22)

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[14] Gospel of Matthew. [Translator]

This means: 'If I will, John will not die till I come again'. These verses show with great clarity that Jesus had made a promise that some people would still be alive when he returned; among these, he had named John. The fulfillment of this promise was therefore inevitable. Accordingly, Christians also admit that for the prophecy to be fulfilled in accordance with the promise, it was inevitable that Jesus should have come at a time when some of his disciples were still alive. This is also the basis of the clergymen's declaration that Jesus had come to Jerusalem at the time of its destruction, as he had promised, and that John had seen him, as he was still alive at the time. But it should be noted that Christians do not say that Jesus really came down from heaven accompanied by appointed signs; they rather say that he appeared to John in a kind of vision so that he might fulfil his prophecy contained in Matthew 16:38.[15] But I say that such coming does not fulfil the prophecy. It is a very poor attempt at interpretation and is meant to avoid the objections inherent in the prophecy. This interpretation is evidently untenable and wrong, so much so, that it needs no refutation, for if Jesus had to appear to anyone in a dream or a vision, a prophecy of this kind would be ridiculous.*

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[15] This is a misprint in the first edition; the correct reference is 16:28. (Translator)

* I have seen in certain books interpretations of Matthew 26:24[16] by Muslim clerics which are more laboured than even the interpretations of Christians; they say that when Jesus declared it to be a sign of his coming that some people of that generation would still be alive and that a disciple would also be alive when the Messiah would appear, it is necessary that that disciple should be living up till now, for the Messiah has not come yet; and they think that that disciple is hiding somewhere on some mountain, awaiting the Messiah! (Author)

[16] This is a misprint in the first edition; the correct reference is 16:28. (Translator)

Moreover, Jesus had also appeared to Paul long before this in the same manner. It appears that the prophecy contained in Matthew 16:28 has caused a panic among the padres and they have not been able to give it a rational meaning consistent with their own beliefs. It was difficult for them to say that Jesus, at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, had descended from heaven in glory, and that, like the lightning which lights up the heavens, was seen by everybody; and also it was not easy for them to ignore the statement, 'Some of those who are standing here will not taste death till they have seen the Son of man coming in his kingdom.' Therefore, as a result of a laboured interpretation they believed in the fulfillment of the prophecy in the form of a vision. But this is not true; righteous servants of God always appear in visions to the divinely elect, and for a vision it is not even necessary that they should appear only in a dream, they can be seen even when one is awake, and I myself have experienced such phenomena. I have seen visions in which I met Jesus many a time, and I have also met some of the other prophets, while I was fully awake. I have also seen our Chief, Lord and Master, the Holy Prophet Muhammad[sa] many a time in this condition, and I have talked to him in such a clear state of being awake that sleep or drowsiness had nothing to do with it. I have also met some dead people at their graves or other places while I was awake, and have talked to them. I very well know that such a meeting with the dead in this state is possible, and that not only can we meet, we can also talk to them and even shake hands. Between this and the ordinary state of being awake there is no difference during such an experience; a person feels that he is in this very world, has

the same ears, eyes and tongue, but deeper reflection reveals a different universe. The world cannot understand this kind of experience, for the world lies in a state of indifference. This experience is a gift of God for those who are endowed with an extra sensory perception. The experience is of course genuine and authentic. Therefore, when Jesus appeared to John after the destruction of Jerusalem, though the latter might have seen him while fully awake, and though they might have had some conversation and a handshake between them, nevertheless, the incident has nothing to do with the prophecy. Such phenomena often take place in the world and even now, if I devote some attention to it, I can by the grace of God see Jesus or some other holy prophet while I am awake. But such a meeting would not fulfil the prophecy contained in Matthew 16:28.

What actually happened was that Jesus knew that he would be saved from the cross and would migrate to another land, that God would neither let him die nor take him away from this world as long as he had not seen the destruction of the Jews with his own eyes, and that he would not die unless and until the kingdom of heaven, vouchsafed to the godly, realized its aims and objectives. Jesus made this prophecy to assure his disciples that they would presently see the sign that those who had raised the sword against him would be killed with the sword during his lifetime and in his very presence. Thus, if evidence is of any value, there is no greater evidence to convince the Christians than the fact that Jesus himself prophesied that some of them would still be alive when he returned.

Remember, the Gospels contain two kinds of prophecies about the coming of Jesus:

i. The promise of his coming in the latter days means his coming in the spiritual sense, like the coming of Elijah before the coming of the Messiah. Like Elijah, he has already appeared in this age and it is I, the writer, a servant of mankind, who has appeared in the name of the Messiah as the Promised Messiah. Jesus has told of my coming in the Gospels, and blessed is he who, out of love for Jesus, considers my claim with justice and fairness, and saves himself from going astray.

ii. The other prophecies regarding the second coming of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels constitute evidence of his life which continued after the experience of the cross, by the sheer grace of God. It was in accordance with the prophecy that God saved his chosen servant from death on the cross.

Christians are mistaken in mixing up these two contexts. Because of this, they end up confused and have to face many complications. The verse in chapter 16 of Matthew is, therefore, a very important piece of evidence in support of Jesus' escape from the cross.

Among the testimonies of the Gospels which have reached us, is also the following verse of Matthew:

> ***And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30)***

Jesus says that a time will come when, from heaven, as a result of divine intervention, such knowledge and evidence

will come to hand as will invalidate the doctrines of his divinity, death on the cross, going up to heaven and coming back again; and that heaven will bear witness against the lies of those, for example the Jews, who denied his being a true prophet, and condemned him as accursed on account of his death on the cross. The fact that he did not suffer death on the cross and was, therefore, not accursed would be clearly established; that as a result all the nations of the earth, who had exaggerated or detracted from his true station, would become greatly ashamed of their error; that, in the same age, when this fact would be disclosed, people would see Jesus' spiritual descent to the earth. It means that the Promised Messiah, who would come in the power and spirit of Jesus, would appear with all the lustrous signs, heavenly support, and power and glory which would be easily recognised. When further explained, the verse means that God's will has so made the person of Jesus and such are the events of his life that they cause some people to exaggerate, and others to downgrade his status. There are those who have placed him above the category of human beings, so much so that they say that he has not yet died and is sitting alive in heaven. Then there are those who have gone one better and say that, having died on the cross and come back to life again, he has gone to heaven and become invested with all the powers of divinity and that he is God Himself. Then there are the Jews, who say that he was killed on the cross and therefore (We take refuge with God for this) he is accursed for all times to come; that he is doomed to be the object of perpetual divine wrath; that God is disgusted with him and looks upon him as his hated enemy; that he is a liar, an impostor, an apostate, and a rank

unbeliever and that he is not from God. (We again take refuge with God for this). These exaggerations and detractions were so unjust that it was but natural that God Himself should exonerate His true prophet from these charges. The verse of the Gospel quoted above also points to this fact. The statement that all the nations of the earth would mourn and lament suggests that all those people to whom the term 'nation' applies would mourn on that day; they would beat their breasts and cry, and great would be their mourning. Christians had better study this verse a little carefully and consider. When the verse prophesies that all the nations would beat their breasts, how then is it possible that Christians shall stay away from this mourning? Are they not a nation? When, in accordance with this verse, they are a part of those who shall beat their breasts, why then are they not concerned about their salvation? The verse clearly says that when the sign of the Messiah appears in the heavens, all the nations inhabiting the earth will mourn. Anyone who says that his people will not mourn denies Jesus. Only those who are yet a small minority cannot be the people hinted at in the prophecy, as they are not yet numerous enough to be described as a nation. These people are none but us. Ours is the only community which is outside the sense and scope of this prophecy, for this community has yet only a few adherents to whom the term 'nation' cannot be applied. Jesus, on the authority of divine revelation, says that when a particular sign appears in the heavens all the people of the world who, on account of their numbers, deserve to be described as a nation will beat their breasts; there will be no exception but those who are small in number and to whom the term

nation cannot apply. Neither Christians, nor Muslims, nor Jews, nor any other denier, can keep out of the purview of this prophecy. Our community alone is outside its scope for God has only just sowed us like a seed. The word of a prophet can never fail. The prophecy contains the unmistakable hint that every nation inhabiting the world will mourn. Now which of these people can claim to be outside its scope? Jesus admits of no exception in this verse. The group which has not yet attained the size of a nation is in any case an exception, and that is our community. This prophecy has been clearly fulfilled in this age, for the truth, which has now been revealed regarding Jesus, is undoubtedly the cause of mourning for all these nations, because it has exposed the error of their thinking. The hue and cry of Christians over the divinity of Jesus turns into sighs of grief; the insistence of Muslims day in and day out that Jesus has gone up to the skies alive, changes into weeping and wailing; and as for the Jews, they stand to lose everything.

Here it is necessary to mention that in the statement contained in the said verse, namely, that at that time all the nations of the earth would mourn and beat their breasts, the word 'earth' means Bilaad-i-Shaam[17] with which these three peoples are basically connected—Jews, because that is their place of origin and their place of worship; Christians, because Jesus appeared in that place, and the early Christians lived there; Muslims, because they are the heirs to the land to the Last Day. If the word 'earth' is taken to embrace all countries, even then it presents no difficulty, for

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[17] Syria and its neighbouring areas. (Translator)

when the truth is laid bare all deniers would be ashamed.

Among the testimonies that have reached us through the Gospels, is this statement from the Gospel of Matthew:

> *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his (Jesus') resurrection and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many. (Matthew 27:52)*

There is not the slightest doubt that the story mentioned in the Gospel that after the resurrection of Jesus the saints came out of the graves and appeared alive to many, is not based on any historical fact; for, had it been so, the Judgment Day would have taken place in this very world, and what had been kept secret as a test of faith and sincerity would have been made manifest to all. Faith would not have been faith, and, in the sight of every believer and denier, the nature of the next world would have become an evident and open fact, like the existence of the moon, the sun, and the alternation of day and night. In that case, faith would have no value, nor would it merit any reward.

If the people and past prophets of Israel whose number is millions, had really been brought to life at the time of the crucifixion and had in fact come back to the city alive, and if this miracle, that hundred of thousands of saints and prophets were all brought to life at the same time, were really shown to prove the truth and divinity of Jesus, the Jews would have had an excellent opportunity to inquire of their prophets, saints, and other ancestors, whether Jesus who claimed to be God was indeed God, or was he a liar! One can easily imagine that they could not have missed this welcome opportunity. They must have inquired about Jesus, for the Jews were very keen to compare notes with

the dead if they could be restored to life. When, therefore, hundreds of thousands of the dead were restored to life, and flocked to the city in their thousands, how could the Jews have let go such an opportunity? They must have inquired, not from one or two, but from thousands; and when the dead entered their respective houses there must have been great commotion all over the place, for many hundreds of thousands of them had been brought back to life. In every house there must have been great excitement, and everybody must have been questioning the dead as to whether the man Jesus, who called himself the Messiah, was really God. But because the Jews, after the testimony of the dead, did not believe in Jesus, as we would expect them to do, nor did their hearts soften, rather if anything, they became confirmed in their hard-heartedness, it appears more than probable that the dead did not speak a single favourable word for him. They must have pronounced straightaway that this man was making a false claim to Godhood, and was lying against God. That was why the Jews did not desist from mischief in spite of the fact that hundreds of thousands of prophets and apostles had been restored to life. Having 'killed' Jesus, they attempted to kill all others. How can one believe that hundreds of thousands of saints who, right from the time of Adam up to the time of John the Baptist, had been resting in their graves in the holy land, should all be brought back to life; that they should all flock to the city to preach, and everyone of them should stand up and testify before thousands of people that Jesus, the Messiah, was really the Son of God—no, God Himself; that he alone should be worshipped; that the people should renounce their former beliefs, otherwise, they would go to

hell, which these saints had witnessed for themselves! Yet, notwithstanding such excellent evidence and such eyewitness accounts which proceeded from the mouths of hundreds of thousands of dead saints, the Jews should not desist from their denial! I personally am not prepared to believe this. Therefore, if hundreds of thousands of saints, prophets and apostles, etc., who were dead, had really come to life and had visited the city to give evidence, they must undoubtedly have given unfavourable evidence; they could never have borne witness to the divinity of Jesus. Perhaps this is the reason why the Jews became more firmly entrenched in their disbelief after listening to the evidence of the dead. Jesus wanted them to believe in his divinity, but they, because of this evidence, denied that he was even a prophet.

In short, such beliefs have a highly deleterious and unhealthy effect, namely, to say that hundreds of thousands of dead persons, or any dead person before that time, had been brought back to life by Jesus; for the restoration to life of the dead did not serve any useful purpose. A person who has visited a far-off country and comes back to his hometown after several years of absence is naturally keen to tell the people of his strange experiences, and to relate to them the wonderful stories of the land he has visited. He will not keep mum or remain tongue-tied when he meets his people after a long period of separation. No, at such a time, others also are keen to listen to him and question him about the far off places; and if perchance, there comes to these people some poor and lowly person, humble in appearance, who yet claims to be the king of the country of which the principal town has already been visited by these

people and who says that he is superior in his kingly rank even to this and that king, the people are always wont to question such itinerants whether the man, going about in their country, is really the king of that land; to which question these travellers reply to the best of their knowledge. This being so, the bringing of the dead to life by Jesus would have been, as I have stated before, worth believing in, if the evidence on which the dead must have been questioned, which was but natural, had led to some useful result. However, this was not at all the case. Therefore, along with the supposition that the dead were brought back to life, one is compelled to suppose that the dead did not give evidence favourable to Jesus which could lead one to believe in his truth. They rather gave evidence which added to the already existing confusion. Would that instead of human beings, some animal had been restored to life! Perhaps the idea was to preserve secrecy. For example, if it had been said that Jesus had brought back to life several thousand bullocks, it would have been 'reasonable' enough, and, if the question was asked as to what the evidence of these dead animals had led to, the answer would have been easy: how could the mute bullocks testify one way or the other? The dead, however, whom Jesus brought back to life, were human beings. Suppose some of the Hindus were asked if ten or twenty of their dead ancestors were restored to life and brought back to this world and were asked to state which religion was the true religion, would they still have any doubt about the truth of that religion? They would never say No. Therefore, take it for a certainty that there is no man in the whole world who would persist in his disbelief and denial after such a disclosure. What a pity that

in inventing such stories, the Sikhs of our country have fared better than the Christians. The Sikhs have given proof of their astuteness in the art of inventing stories; for they state that their Guru, Bawa Nanak, once restored a dead elephant to life. This 'miracle' is not open to the above objection, for the Sikhs can say: the elephant had no tongue to bear witness for or against Bawa Nanak. In short, the common people, endowed with little intellect, are pleased with such 'miracles', but the wise are embarrassed by the objections raised by others and are put to shame when such silly stories are related. Now, as I bear the same feelings of love and sincerity towards Jesus as do the Christians; rather, I have a stronger attachment to him, for Christians do not know the man whom they praise, but I know him whom I praise, for I have as good as seen him. Therefore, I now proceed to unveil the real nature of the reports contained in the Gospels that at the time of the crucifixion all dead saints had come back to life and returned to the city.

Let it, therefore, be clearly understood that accounts like these are of the nature of *Kashf* or visions that were seen by some holy men after the crucifixion, in which they saw that the dead saints had been brought back to life and graced the city where they met the people. Just as dreams mentioned in divine scriptures are interpreted, for instance, Joseph's dream, this vision too had an interpretation of its own. The interpretation was that Jesus had not died on the cross and that God had rescued him. If the question is asked as to the rationale behind this interpretation, the answer is that experts in the art of interpretation testify to its validity and have borne witness to it on the basis of their experience. I quote below from *T'atirul-Anaam*, a time honoured

authority on the art of interpretation of dreams:

من رأى أن الموتى وثبوا من قبورهم و رجعوا إلى دورهم فانه يطلق من فى السجن

(T'atirul-Anaam fi T'abiril-Manaam by Qutb-uz-Zaman Sheikh Abdul Ghani Al-Naablisi, page 289).

This means that if someone has a dream or a vision that the dead have come out of their graves and have made for their homes, the interpretation is that a prisoner would be released from bondage, and that he would be rescued from the hands of his persecutors. The context shows that this prisoner would be a great and prominent personage. Now, it should be noted how appropriately this interpretation applies to Jesus. One can readily understand that the vision about the dead saints coming to life and returning to the city was meant to inform those with insight that Jesus would be saved from death on the cross.

Likewise, the Gospels at a number of places clearly point out that Jesus did not die on the cross and that he escaped and migrated to another land. I think what I have said so far should suffice for the fair minded to understand the true position. It is possible that objections may arise in some minds that the Gospels also repeatedly point out that Jesus died on the cross, and that after resurrection he rose to heaven. This kind of objection I have already briefly answered, but I might as well repeat that after the crucifixion, Jesus met the disciples; he travelled up to Galilee; ate bread and meat; displayed the wounds on his body; stayed a night with the disciples at Emmaus; escaped secretly from Pilate's jurisdiction; emigrated from that place, as was the practice of prophets; and travelled under the shadow of fear. All these facts prove that he did not die

on the cross; that he retained his bodily functions intact; and that he had undergone no visible change.

Furthermore, the Gospels do not contain any eyewitness account of Jesus' ascent to heaven.* Had there been such an account, it would have lacked credibility, for making mountains out of molehills and magnifying small things into big ones, seems to be a habit with the evangelists. For example, if one of them happens to remark that Jesus is the Son of God, another sets about making him into a full-fledged God, the third invests him with power over the whole universe, and the fourth bluntly says that he is everything, and that there is no other God besides him. In short, exaggerations carry them too far. The vision in which the dead were seen to come out of their graves and make for the city is a case in point. One can notice that this vision had been given a literal interpretation, so far as to say that the dead had actually risen out of their graves, had come to the city of Jerusalem, and even visited their relatives. Consider how a mountain has been made out of a molehill, resulting in a veritable range! How can one arrive at the truth when things are so exaggerated! It is also worth considering that the Gospels, the so-called Books of God, contain preposterous claims, such as that if all the works of Jesus had been committed to writing, there wouldn't be room enough in the whole world to accommodate them![18] Can such exaggeration be the way of honesty and truth? If indeed works of Jesus were so limitless and exceeded all

* No one testifies that he is an eyewitness and that he saw for himself Jesus' bodily ascent to the heavens. (Author)

[18] John 21:25 (Translator)

boundaries, how could they have been compressed into a meager period of three years? Another difficulty about these Gospels is that the references they give of earlier books are mostly wrong; they could not even give Jesus' genealogy correctly. From the Gospels, it appears that the evangelists were rather naive to the extent that they mistook Jesus for a ghost. From the earliest times these Gospels have been open to the charge that they have not been able to preserve the purity of their texts, particularly when there were other books too which were compiled as Gospels. There is no earthly reason why all the statements of those books should be rejected, and why all that is contained in the Gospels, generally so-called, should be admitted as true. We do not think that the other Gospels could contain such unfounded exaggerations as are to be found in the present four Gospels. It is surprising that while on the one hand, they say that Jesus was a righteous person and that his character was without blemish, on the other hand, charges are brought against him as are unworthy of a righteous person. For example, the Israelite prophets, in accordance with the teaching of the Torah, undoubtedly had hundreds of wives each at a time in order that they might thereby produce a whole generation of righteous people. But you will never have heard that any prophet had ever set such an example of permissiveness that he should allow a wanton and lascivious woman, a noted sinner of the city, to touch his body with her hands, to let her rub oil—her sin's earnings—on his head and to stroke his feet with her hair; that he allowed all this to be done by an unchaste young woman, and didn't so much as tell her to stop it. One is saved from giving way to suspicion, which naturally arises

on seeing such a spectacle, only by an implicit trust in the goodness of Jesus. Nevertheless, the example is hardly worthy of being followed. In short, these Gospels are full of material which shows that they have not preserved their original form, or that their writers were other than the disciples. For example, can the statement: "And this is well known among the Jews till today"[19] be properly ascribed to Matthew? Does it not show that the writer of the Gospel was some person other than Matthew, who lived at a time when Matthew had already died? Then, the same Gospel of Matthew says:

> ***And they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, Saying, 'Say ye, his disciples came by night and stole him away while we slept. (Matthew 28:12-13)***

It would be noticed how childish and meaningless such statements are. If it means that the Jews wanted to conceal the rising of Jesus from the dead, and had bribed the soldiers so that this great miracle should not become generally known, why was it that Jesus, whose duty it was to proclaim this miracle among the Jews, kept it a secret and forbade even others to disclose it? If it is urged that he was afraid of being caught, I would say, that when the decree of God had descended upon him once and for all, and he had, after suffering death, come to life again, assuming a spiritual body, what fear did he now have of the Jews? Surely, the Jews now had no power over him; he was now beyond and above mortal existence? One observes with regret that while, on the one hand, it is said that he was

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[19] Matthew 28:15 (Translator)

made to live again and assume a spiritual body, that he met the disciples and went to Galilee and thence went to heaven, he was nevertheless afraid of the Jews over quite trivial things and, in spite of his glorious body, he fled secretly from the country, lest the Jews should discover him; he made a journey of 70 *koses* to Galilee in order to save his life and time and again asked the people not to mention this to others. Are these the signs and ways of a glorious body? No, the truth is that his body was neither new nor glorious, it was the same body with wounds on it, which had been saved from death; and as there was still the fear of the Jews, Jesus took all the necessary precautions and left the country. Anything to the contrary would be senseless and absurd, as that the Jews had bribed the soldiers to make them say that the disciples had stolen the corpse while they (the soldiers) were asleep. If the soldiers were asleep, they could very well have been asked how on earth they came to know in their sleep that the corpse of Jesus had been stolen away. From the mere fact of Jesus not being in the sepulchre, can a sensible person conclude that he had gone up to heaven? May there not be other causes as a result of which tombs might be found empty? At the time of going up to heaven, it was up to Jesus to meet a few hundred Jews, and also Pilate. Who was he afraid of in his glorious body? He did not care to furnish his opponents with the slightest proof. On the contrary, he took fright and fled to Galilee. That is why we positively believe that though it is true that he left the sepulchre, which was a chamber with an opening, and though it is true that he secretly met the disciples, yet it is not true that he was given any new and glorious body. It was the same body, and the same wounds, and there was

the same fear in his heart lest the accursed Jews should arrest him again. Just study closely Matthew 28:7-10. These verses clearly say that the women who were told by someone that Jesus was alive and was going to Galilee, and who were also quietly told that they should inform the disciples, were no doubt pleased to hear this, but they departed with hearts full of fear. They were still afraid lest Jesus might still be caught by some wicked Jew. Verse 9 says, that while these women were on their way to inform the disciples, Jesus met and greeted them. Verse 10 says that Jesus told them not to be afraid of his being caught. He asked them to inform his brethren that they should all go to Galilee;* that they would see him there, i.e., he could not stay there for fear of the enemy. In short, if Jesus had really come to life after his death and had assumed a glorious body, it was up to him to furnish proof of this new kind of existence to the Jews. But we know that he did not do this. It is absurd, therefore, to accuse the Jews of trying to suppress the proof of Jesus' coming to life again. Nor for that matter did Jesus give the slightest proof of his restoration to life; rather, by his secret flight, by the fact of his taking food, and sleep, and showing his wounds, he himself proved that he did not die on the cross.

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* Here, Jesus did not console the women with the words that he had risen with a new and glorious body and that no one could now lay his hands upon him. Instead, seeing the women weak and frail he consoled them casually, as men are wont to console women. In short, he gave no proof of the glorious body; rather, he exhibited his flesh and bones and thus demonstrated that his was an ordinary mortal body. (Author)

Chapter Two

Containing Evidence from the Holy Quran and Authentic *Ahadith* which relates to Jesus being Saved from the Cross

The arguments which I am now going to set down might seem to all intents and purposes of little use to the Christians, because they are not bound by what the Holy Quran and the *Hadith* have to say on the subject. But I still mention them because I wish to inform the Christians of a miracle of the Holy Quran and the Holy Prophet[sa]; I want them to know that the truths which have now been discovered after hundreds of years have already been disclosed by our Holy Prophet[sa] and the Holy Quran. I am now going to mention some of them. God says in the Holy Quran:

وَمَا قَتَلُوْهُ وَمَا صَلَبُوْهُ وَلٰكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ ..... وَمَا قَتَلُوْهُ يَقِيْنًا [20]

It means the Jews neither murdered Jesus, nor did they kill him on the cross; they were merely labouring under the misconception that Jesus had died on the cross; they did not have evidence enough to convince and satisfy them that Jesus had really died on the cross.

In these verses God Almighty says that though it is true that Jesus was apparently placed on the cross, and that the intention was to kill him; yet it was wrong for the Jews and Christians to suppose that Jesus actually died on the cross.

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[20] 4 : 158 (Translator)

What happened was that God caused things to happen which saved Jesus from death on the cross. Justice demands that we acknowledge the truth of what the Holy Quran has said, as opposed to the Jewish and Christian beliefs. Highly qualified modern researchers have proved that Jesus had actually been saved from death on the cross. A study of the records shows that the Jews have never been able to answer the question as to how Jesus died within two or three hours of being put on the cross even when his bones had not been broken? This has led the Jews to invent another plea: that they killed Jesus by the sword, but the ancient history of the Jews does not show that Jesus was killed by the sword. In order to save Jesus, divine power and majesty intervened and caused darkness to prevail, which was followed by an earthquake. Pilate's wife saw a dream. The Sabbath night during which it was illegal to let a crucified body remain on the cross was drawing close. The magistrate, because of the terrible dream, became disposed towards the release of Jesus. All this was simultaneously brought about by God to save Jesus, and Jesus himself was made to go into a swoon so that he might be taken for dead. Through terrible signs like the earthquake, the Jews panicked and became fearful of heavenly punishment. They were also afraid lest the corpses should remain on their crosses during the night of Sabbath. They thought that Jesus was dead when, in fact, he was in a coma. It was dark and there was an earthquake and great turmoil. They also became anxious about their homes and what their children must be passing through in the darkness and the earthquake. There was terror in their hearts that if this man was a liar and an apostate, as they thought he was, why were mighty signs manifested at the

moment of his suffering, signs which had not been manifested before? They were so upset that they were no longer in a position to find out for themselves whether Jesus had really died, or what exactly his condition was? What had come about, however, was a Divine design to save Jesus, to which the verse وَلٰكِنْ شُبِّهَ لَهُمْ that is, *'the Jews did not kill Jesus; but it was God who made them believe that they had killed him,'* refers. It is these circumstances which encourage the righteous to place great trust in God, and to believe that God can save His servants as He pleases.

The Holy Quran also says concerning the Messiah, son of Mary:

وَجِيْهًا فِي الدُّنْيَا وَالْاٰخِرَةِ وَمِنَ الْمُقَرَّبِيْنَ[21]

This means that not only will Jesus have honour and eminence, and enjoy greatness in the people's eyes in this world, but also in the hereafter. It is evident that Jesus was not honoured in the land of Herod and Pilate. On the contrary, he suffered great disgrace and insult. That he would be honoured during his second coming to this earth is a groundless delusion, which is diametrically opposed to the Scriptures and God's eternal law of nature. The truth is that Jesus, having escaped from those accursed people, graced the land of the Punjab with his presence, where he met the ten lost tribes of Israel and God blessed him with great honour and eminence. It seems that most of them had adopted Buddhism and some had degenerated into idolatry of a very low kind. But with the coming here of Jesus, most of them returned to the right path, and since the teaching of

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[21] 3 : 46 (Translator)

Jesus contained the exhortation to believe in the coming of another prophet, all the ten tribes who came to be known in this land as Afghans and Kashmiris ultimately became Muslims. Jesus was accorded great esteem and respect in this land. Recently a coin has been discovered in the Punjab, which bears the name of Jesus in Pali characters. This coin goes back to the time of Jesus, and it clearly shows that he came to this land and was given royal reception, and the coin must have been issued by a king who had become his follower. Another coin displays the figure of an Israelite male. It appears that this too is the figure of Jesus. The Holy Quran also contains a verse which says that Jesus was blessed by God wherever he went.[22] And these coins show that he received great blessings from God, and that he did not die until he was honoured like a king.

Elsewhere the Holy Quran says:

وَ مُطَهِّرُكَ مِنَ الَّذِيْنَ كَفَرُوْا[23]

Meaning that, '0 Jesus! I shall clear thee of these charges; I shall prove thy innocence and shall clear thee of all accusations levelled against thee by the Jews and the Christians.' This was indeed a great prophecy. The Jews alleged that Jesus, having been crucified, became accursed (God forbid), and thus forfeited the love of God, that Jesus' heart, as the word 'curse' applies, was estranged and alienated from God, that his heart became enveloped in a thick veil of darkness, came to love evil and hate virtue, broke away from God and was brought under the sway of

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[22] وَ جَعَلَنِيْ مُبٰرَكًا اَيْنَ مَا كُنْتُ – 19 : 32 (Translator)
[23] 3 : 56 (Translator)

the Satan and that there was real animosity between him and God! The same charge of his being accursed, was brought by Christians too, who have so naively tried to combine two contradictory views. On the one hand, they say that Jesus was the Son of God, and on the other, they call him accursed. What is more, they admit that one who is accursed is the son of Darkness and of the Devil, rather he is the Devil himself. So, these were the foul charges brought against Jesus. The prophecy of the Holy Quran, however, points out that a time would come when God would clear Jesus of these charges and this indeed is the time when this was to happen.

The testimony of the Holy Prophet[sa] has no doubt established the innocence of Jesus in the eyes of thoughtful people, for the Holy Prophet[sa] and the Holy Quran have both testified that the charges brought against Jesus are all unfounded. But this evidence was too subtle and difficult for the common man to understand. Divine justice, therefore, required that just as the crucifixion of Jesus was a known, objective and tangible event, so should his innocence and exoneration be demonstrated objectively. And this is what has actually come to pass. The innocence of Jesus has not only been proved *a priori* but also *a posteriori*. For hundreds of thousands of people have, with their own eyes, seen that the tomb of Jesus lies in Srinagar,[24] Kashmir. As Jesus was crucified at Golgotha or the site of the Skull, his tomb too has been found at the site of the Skull i.e.

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[24] The word 'Srinagar' comprises two Hindi words, 'siri' (skull) and 'nagar' (place), meaning 'Place of Skull'. The place where Jesus was put on the cross, was also called 'Place of Skull'. See Matthew 27:33, Mark 15:22, Luke 23:33, John 19:17. (Translator)

Srinagar. That the word *Sri* (Skull) should occur in the names of both the places is a strange coincidence indeed. The place where Jesus was crucified was called Gilgit (Golgotha) or *Sri* (Skull), and the place where in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the tomb of Jesus has been discovered is also called *Gilgit*, or *Sri*. It appears that the place called Gilgit, Kashmir, also suggests the term *Sri*. This town was probably founded in the time of Jesus, and as a local memorial to the crucifixion, it was named Gilgit, or Sri; similarly Lhasa, which means the 'city of one worthy of worship'; is of Hebrew origin, and Lhasa too was founded in the time of Jesus.

Reliable reports in the *Ahadith* show that the Holy Prophet[sa] said that Jesus lived to an advanced age of 125. Besides, all the sects of Islam believe that Jesus had two unique characteristics as are not to be found in any other prophet:

i. He lived to the ripe old age of 125 years.
ii. He extensively travelled in many parts of the world and was therefore called the *'travelling prophet'*.

It is evident that had he been raised to the skies at 33, the report that he lived for 125 years could not be true, nor could he have managed to travel so widely when he was a mere 33. Not only is this report found in the old and reliable collections of *Ahadith*, it is not possible to think of a report which is more widely known and so consistently accepted among all the sects of Islam.

Kanz-ul-Ummal, which is a comprehensive collection of *Ahadith*, contains this *Hadith*, in volume 2 page 34, from Abu Huraira[rz]:

25 اوحی اللّٰہ تعالیٰ الی عیسیٰ ان یا عیسیٰ انتقل من مکان الی مکان لئلا تعرف فتوذی

God revealed to Jesus thus: '0 Jesus! Keep on moving from one place to another', go from one country to another lest thou shouldst be recognised and persecuted.

Again, in the same Book (volume 2 page 71) Jaabir[rz] reports:

26 کان عیسی ابن مریم یسیح فاذا امسی اکل بقل الصحراء و یشرب ماء القراح

Jesus continuously travelled from one country to another, wherever he happened to be at nightfall, he would partake of the vegetables of the jungle and drink fresh water.

And in the same book (volume 6 page 51) Abdullah bin Umar[rz] reports:

قال احب شیٔ الی اللّٰہ الغرباء قیل ای شیٔ الغرباء قال الذین یفرّون بدینھم و یجتمعون الی عیسی ابن مریم 27

The Holy Prophet[sa] said: 'The people most favoured in the sight of God are the Ghareeb.' When asked, what was meant by the term Ghareeb, he replied 'They are the people who, like Jesus, the Messiah, have to flee from their country to save their faith?'

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25 See کنز العمال الکتاب الثالث من حرف الھمزة الباب الاول فی الاخلاق و الافعال المحمودة – فصل خوف العاقبة – رقم الحدیث ٥٩٥٥ [Translator]

26 The word یشرب is a misprint. It should be شرب. (See کنز العمال الکتاب الثالث من حرف الھمزة – الباب الاول فی الاخلاق و الافعال المحمودة – فصل الصبر علی انواع البلایا و المکارہ – رقم الحدیث ٦٨٥٢) [Translator]

27 See کنز العمال کتاب الفتن من قسم الافعال – فصل فی الوصیة فی الفتن printed at Daira-tul-Maarif Al-Nizamia Press, Hyderabad, India, 1313 Hijra. [Translator]

Chapter Three

Evidence from Medical Literature

We have come across a piece of highly valuable evidence concerning the escape of Jesus from the cross, whose authenticity one just can't help admitting. It is a medical preparation known as *Marham-i-Isa* or the 'Ointment of Jesus' and is found recorded in hundreds of medical books. Some of these books were compiled by Christians, some by Magians or even Jews, and some by Muslims. Most of them are old classics. Investigations show that in the beginning, based on oral tradition, the preparation came to be known by hundreds of thousands of people. Later it was duly recorded. In the days of Jesus, shortly after the crucifixion, a pharmacopoeia was compiled in Latin, which recorded this prescription and testified that it had been prepared for the treatment of the wounds of Jesus. Later, this work was translated into several other languages, until, in the time of Mamun-al-Rashid, it was translated into Arabic. Strange are the ways of divine providence, eminent physicians of all religions, Christians, Jews, Magians and Muslims, have all recorded this preparation in their books, and have admitted that it was prepared for Jesus by the disciples. A study of different pharmacopoeias shows that this preparation is very useful in injuries sustained by blows or falls; it immediately arrests the flow of blood, and, as it contains 'myrrh', the wound remains aseptic. The ointment is also useful in plague; it is good for boils and ulcers of all kinds.

It is, however, not clear whether the ointment was prepared by Jesus himself after he had undergone the trauma of the cross, as a result of divine revelation, or that it was prepared after consultation with some physician. Some of its ingredients are specifics, especially 'myrrh' which is mentioned also in the Torah. In any case, the wounds of Jesus healed up in a few days by the use of this ointment. Within three days he recovered sufficiently to be able to march 70 *Koses* on foot from Jerusalem to Galilee. Hence, regarding the efficacy of this preparation, it is enough to say that while Jesus healed others, this preparation healed Jesus! The books which record this fact number more than one thousand. It would take long to mention them all. Moreover, as the prescription is a famous one among the physicians practising Greek medicine, I need not mention the titles of all these books; but I shall set down below the names of a few which are available here.

List of books containing a mention of Marham-i-Isa, and a statement that the ointment was prepared for Jesus' wounds

- *Qaanun* by Sheikh-ul-Rais Bu Ali Sina, Vol.III, page 133.
- *Sharah Al-Qaanun* by Allama Qutb-ud-Din Shiraazi, Vol.III.
- *Kaamil-us-Sana'ah* by Ali Bin-al-Abbas Al- Majoosi, Vol.II, page 602.
- *Majmu'ah Al-Baqaa'i* by Mahmud Muhammad Ismail, Mukhatib of Khaqan , known as father of Muhammad Baqaa Khan, Vol.II, page 497.
- *Tazkirah ul-ul-Albaab*, by Sheikh Daud Al-Zareer Al-Antaaki, page 303.
- *Qaraabadin-i-Rumi*, compiled about the time of Jesus

and translated in the reign of Maamun al-Rasheed into Arabic—Skin Diseases.

- *Umdat-ul-Muhtaaj* by Ahmad Bin Hasan al-Rasheedi al-Hakeem. In this book, Marham-i-Isa, and other preparations have been noted from a hundred, perhaps more than a hundred books, all these books being in French.
- *Qaraabadeen*, in Persian, by Hakeem Muhammad Akbar Arzaani— Skin Diseases.
- *Shifa-ul-Asqaam*, vol.II, page 230.
- *Mir'at-ush-Shifaa*, by Hakeem Nathu Shah (manuscript) —Skin Diseases.
- *Zakhira-i-Khawarzam Shaahi*—Skin Diseases.
- *Sharah Qaanun Gilaani*, Vol.III.
- *Sharah Qaanun Qarshi*, Vol.III.
- *Qaraabaadeen* by Alwi Khan—Skin Diseases.
- *Ilaaj-ul-Amraadh* by Hakeem Muhammad Sharif Khan, page 893.
- *Qaraabaadeen*, Greek—Skin Diseases.
- *Tuhfat-ul-Mo'mineen*, on the margin of *Makhzan-ul-Adwiyah*, page 713.
- *Muheet fi-Tibb*, page 367.
- *Ikseer-i-A'azam*, Vol. IV, by Hakeem Muhammad A'azam Khan, alias Naazim-i-Jahan, page 331.
- *Qaraabaadeen* Ma'sumi-ul-Masum bin Karim-ud-Din Al-Shustri Shiraazi.
- *Ujaala-i-Naafiah* by Muhammad Sharif Dehlavi, page 410.
- *Tibb-i-Shibri*, otherwise known as Lawami Shibriyyah by Syed Hussain Shibr Kaazimi, page 471.

- *Makhzan-i-Sulaimaani*, translation of *Iksir-i-Arabi*, page 599, by Muhammad Shams-ud-Din of Bahawalpur.
- *Shifaa-ul-Amraadh*, translated by Maulana Al-Hakim Muhammad Noor Karim, 282.
- *Al-Tibb Dara Shaukohi*, by Nur-ud-Din Muhammad Abdul Hakeem, Ain-ul-Mulk Al-Shiraazi, page 360
- Minhaaj-ud-Dukaan bi-Dastoor-ul-Aayaan fi A'amaal wa Tarkib al-Naafiah lil-Abdaan by Aflaatoon-i-Zamaanah and Rais-i-Awaanah Abul-Minaa Ibn Abi Nasr-il-Attaar Al-Israeli AI-Harooni (i.e., Jew), page 86.
- *Zubdat-ul-Tibb*, by Syed-ul-Imam Abu Ibrahim Ismail bin Hasanul-Hussaini AI-Jurjaani, page 182.
- *Tibb-i-Akbar* by Muhammad Akbar Arzaani, page 242.
- *Mizaan-ul-Tibb* by Muhammad Akbar Arzani, page 152.
- *Sadidi* by Rais-ul-Mutakallimeen Imam-ul Mohaqqiqeen Al-Sadidul-Kaazrooni, Vol.II, page 283.
- *Haadi Kabir*, by Ibn-i-Zakariyaa—Skin Diseases.
- *Qaraabaadeen* by Ibn-i-Tilmeez—Skin Diseases.
- *Qaraabaadeen* by Ibn-i-Abi Saadiq—Skin Diseases.

These are only token names. Scientists, especially physicians, know it well that earlier on, under Muslim rule, most of these books were used as text books at important centers of learning, where scholars from as far as Europe came to study. It is a fact, and there is not the slightest exaggeration about it, that in every century there have been millions of people who have been acquainted with these books; hundreds of thousands have been studying them intensively from end to end. We can assert with all the emphasis at our command, that not a single person from among the scholars of Europe and Asia has been ignorant of

the names of at least some of the books listed above. When Hispania and Kasmonu and Satlirnem* were seats of learning, Bu Ali Sina's (Avicenna's) *Qaanun*, a great medical classic in which there is set out the prescription of Marham-i-Isa and other books like Shifaa and Ishaaraat and Bisharaat, on science, astronomy, and philosophy, were eagerly studied by the Europeans. Likewise, the original works of scholars like Abu Nasr Faaraabi, Abu Raihaan, Israaeel, Thabit bin Qurrah and Hunain bin Is'haq, etc., and their translations of Greek classics were also used as text books. Translations of their works are still extant in Europe today. As Muslim rulers were keen patrons of medicine, they got good Greek works translated. Khilafat remained vested for a long time in kings who happened to desire expansion of knowledge more than the extension of their dominions, that was why they not only had Greek books translated into Arabic but also invited learned Pundits from India, and got them to translate medical and other books, rewarding them handsomely. One of the greatest debts that seekers of true knowledge owe to them, therefore, is that they got Latin and Greek medical classics translated into Arabic, which contained a mention of the 'Ointment of Jesus', and which displays and records, almost as an epitaph, the fact that the ointment had been prepared for the treatment of Jesus' injuries. When the scholars of Islamic era, such as Thabit bin Qurrah and Hunain bin Is'haaq who, apart from medicine, other natural sciences, philosophy, etc., were also well versed in Greek, translated the

* *Hispania* or Andalusia; *Kasmonu* or Kastamonu; *Satrilnem* or Santarem. (Author)

Qaraabaadeen (Pharmacopoeia), which contains details about Marham-i-Isa, they were wise enough to retain the Greek term *Shalikha*,[28] which means 'twelve', without translating it into Arabic, as a reminder that the book was a translation from Greek. That is why the term *Shalikha* still figures out in almost all the books.

It is also worth noting that though old coins are very useful in solving the great secrets of history, ancient books, which have been known to millions of people throughout the centuries, and have been taught as text books at important seats of learning and are still being used, are a thousand times more valuable than coins and inscriptions. For, in the case of coins and inscriptions, the possibility of fraud is always there. The classics which, ever since their compilation, have been known to millions of people and have been preserved and guarded by all nations and are still being guarded, constitute a much more valuable piece of evidence than coins and inscriptions. Can anyone possibly name a coin or inscription which has attained such fame as the *Qaanun* of Bu Ali Sina (Avicenna)? In short, *Marham-i-Isa*—the ointment of Jesus—constitutes a very important testimony for seekers after truth. If it is to be rejected, all historical testimony would lose credibility. Although the number of such books containing a mention of *Marham-i-Isa* is about one thousand or even more, and these books and their authors are known to millions, anyone who does not

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[28] According to *Qaanun* of Avicenna (*Al-Qaanun Fi Al-Tibb* by Abu Ali Ibn-e-Sina vol. 3 chapter 4 on ointments), the Ointment of Jesus has also been known as *Marham Dashlikha*, *Marham-ul-Hawariyyin*, and *Marham-ur-Rusol*, and contains twelve ingredients corresponding to the twelve disciples. (Translator)

accept this obvious, clear and strong proof must be allergic to all historical evidence. Can one ignore with impunity such a strong piece of evidence and can one doubt such incontrovertible testimony which has encompassed all Europe and Asia and which is the result of the combined testimony of famous Jewish, Christian, Magian and Muslim philosophers?

Fair-minded scholars! hasten to accept this great testimony. And listen, O Judges, this is too shining a proof to be ignored. Is it not proper for us to seek light from this Truth which is as bright as the sun?

The suggestion that Jesus might have sustained some injuries before the Call or some time later during his ministry, and not as the result of crucifixion, is nothing but an absurd and meaningless tale. It is simply absurd to say that his hands and feet might have been injured through some other cause, that he might have fallen from a roof, and the ointment might have been prepared for the treatment of the injuries he had thus suffered. It is absurd because before the Call there were no disciples and the ointment speaks of the disciples. The term *Shalikha*, which is Greek for twelve, is still there in these books. Before the Call, moreover, Jesus was not considered important enough for the events of his life to be recorded. His ministry lasted only three-and-a-half years, and during this time no accident or injury, except for the trauma of the cross, has been recorded. The onus of proof lies with him who is under the impression that Jesus sustained these injuries in some other way, for the event of the cross, to which we have referred, is a proved and established historical fact; neither the Jews nor the

Christians deny it. The idea that Jesus received his injuries through some other cause is also not supported by the annals of any nation. To entertain such an idea means to deviate deliberately from the path of truth. But the evidence we have produced cannot be rejected with such meaningless objections.

These manuscripts are in existence even today and for my part, I too possess an antique hand-written manuscript of *Qaanun* by Bu Ali Sina. Therefore, it would be highly unfair, indeed it would amount to an outright murder of truth to throw away so transparent a proof. Think it over and over again, ponder deeply, these books are still possessed by Jews, Magians, Christians, Arabs, Persians, Greeks, Romans, Germans and the French. They are also to be found in the ancient libraries of Europe and Asia. Is it proper to turn away from a proof, whose luster dazzles denial? If these books had been compiled only by Muslims, and if they had been in the hands of the followers of Islam alone, there might have been those who could have jumped to the conclusion that Muslims had forged these facts and recorded them in their books with a view to attacking the Christian creed. But, in addition to the reasons which I shall give shortly, this impression is baseless, because the Muslims could never be guilty of a forgery of this kind; for, like Christians, Muslims also believe that after the crucifixion, Jesus ascended to heaven. Muslims, moreover, do not believe that Jesus was ever put on the cross or that he received any injuries as a result of crucifixion. How then could they knowingly forge a statement contradicting their own belief? Apart from this, Islam was not in existence at the time when these books on medicine, in Latin and Greek,

were compiled and made current among hundreds of thousands of people. These books contained the prescription of the 'Ointment of Jesus' as well as the explanation that this ointment was prepared for Jesus by his disciples. In the context of religion, those people—Jews, Christians, Muslims and Magians – were all opposed to one another. Therefore, the fact that they have mentioned this ointment in their books, regardless of their respective beliefs, proves beyond any doubt that the preparation of the ointment was too well known a fact to be denied by any community or nation. True, until the coming of the Promised Messiah, it did not occur to any of these people to make use of the historical importance of this ointment which was recorded in hundreds of books and was known to millions of people of different nationalities. We have nothing to say here except to acknowledge that God willed it so, and it had been predestined by Him, that this sharp and shining weapon and this crucial and decisive evidence which was meant to destroy the creed of the cross would come to light at the hands of the Promised Messiah. The Holy Prophet[sa] had prophesied that the faith of the cross shall neither decline nor shall its progress slow down until the Promised Messiah appeared in this world. It was at his hands that the 'breaking of the cross' was to be brought about. The point which was meant to be underlined was that in the time of the Promised Messiah, God would create conditions which would lay bare the truth about the crucifixion. The creed of the cross would come to an end and complete its life span, not through war or violence, but exclusively through heavenly causes, in the form of scientific reason and argument. This indeed is the meaning

of the *Hadith* reported in *Bukhari* and other authentic collections of *Ahadith.* It was inevitable, therefore, that heaven should withhold such incontrovertible proof and conclusive evidence until the coming of the Promised Messiah. And so has it come to pass. After the appearance of the Promised One, eyes shall open and thinking people shall begin to think, for the Messiah, the Promised One of God has come; minds shall now be illuminated; hearts shall begin to respond; pens shall come alive; people shall pick up courage; the righteous shall now be given insight; and every seeker shall be granted reason. For, whatever shines in heaven must illuminate the earth. Blessed and fortunate is he who has a share of this light. As the fruit ripens in season, so does the light descend at its appointed time. No one can make it descend before it descends of itself, nor can anyone stop it when it does descend. Differences and controversies are always there. In the end, however, truth will prevail, for this is not the work of man; nor has the son of man the power to do it. It is God who changes the seasons, rotates time, and converts night into day and day into night. He creates darkness but loves light. He lets even *Shirk*—polytheistic beliefs—spread in the world, but He loves *Tauhid*—His Unity. He likes His glory to be His and no one else's. Ever since the birth of man, and until he disappears from the world, the divine law has been that God supports His *Tauhid* or Oneness. The object of all the prophets sent by Him was to eradicate the worship of man and of other creatures and to establish the worship of God in the world. Their duty was to make [29] لا إله إلا الله shine in

[29] There is no God but Allah. [Translator]

the earth as it shines in heaven. The greatest of them, therefore, is he who highlighted this formula with such brilliance; who first exposed the impotence of false gods and proved their insignificance on grounds of reason and strength, and then, when he had proved everything, he left as a symbol of his decisive victory the testament لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ[30] He did not pronounce لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ as an unproved assertion. No, he first proved it, and exposed the errors of false belief and then inviting the attention of the people declared, 'Look, there is no God besides Him who has demolished all your might and shattered your pride.' Thus it was that as the reminder of an established truth, he taught the blessed *Kalima*:

لَا إِلٰهَ إِلَّا اللّٰهُ مُحَمَّدٌ رَّسُوْلُ اللّٰهِ

[30] There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah. (Translator)

Chapter Four

Evidence found in Historical Records

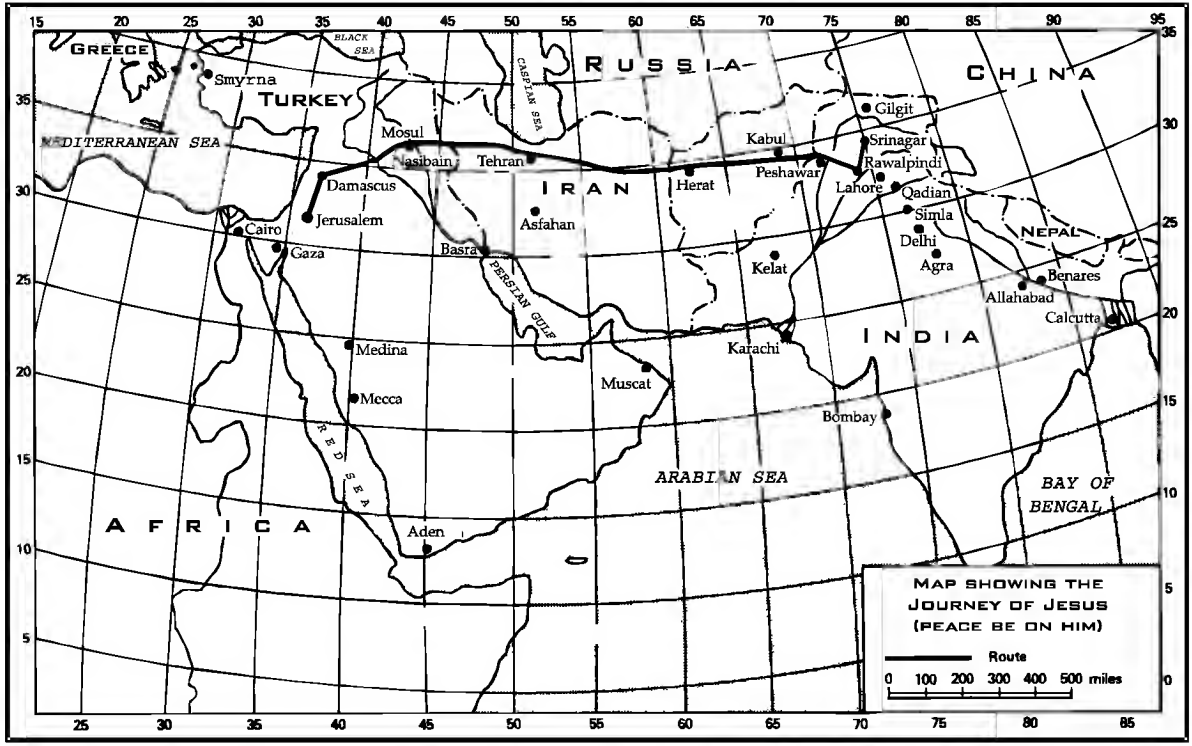
Since this chapter contains different kinds of evidence, I have, for the sake of clarity, divided it into various sections, as follows:

Section One

Evidence from Islamic Literature concerning Jesus' Journeys

On page 130-135 of *Rauzat-us-Safaa,* a well-known book of history in the Persian language, we find an account which, briefly translated, reads as follows:

> ***Jesus was named the Messiah because he was a great traveller. He wore a woolen scarf over his head, and a woolen cloak on his person. Carrying a staff in his hand, he used to wander from country to country and city to city. He slept wherever the night found him. He ate vegetables of the jungle, drank fresh water, and travelled on foot. His companions, in one of his travels, once bought a horse for him; he rode the horse one day, but as he could not make any provision for feeding it, he returned it. Journeying from his country, he arrived at Nasibain, which lay at a distance of several hundred koses from his home. He was accompanied by a few of his disciples whom he sent into the city to preach. In the city, however, false and unfounded rumours were current about Jesus and his mother. The governor of the city, therefore, arrested the disciples and summoned Jesus. Jesus miraculously healed some patients and showed some other miracles. As a result, the king of the territory of Nasibain, with all his armies and his people, became his follower. The incident about the 'coming down of food' mentioned in the Holy Quran took place during his travels.***


GREECE
Smyrna
TURKEY
BLACK SEA
CASPIAN SEA
RUSSIA
CHINA
MEDITERRANEAN SEA
Mosul
Nasibain
Tehran
Kabul
Gilgit
Srinagar
Rawalpindi
Peshawar
Lahore
Qadian
Simla
Herat
IRAN
Damascus
Jerusalem
Cairo
Gaza
Asfahan
Basra
PERSIAN GULF
Delhi
Agra
NEPAL
Kelat
Benares
Allahabad
Calcutta
Karachi
INDIA
Medina
Mecca
Muscat
Bombay
RED SEA
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF BENGAL
AFRICA
Aden
MAP SHOWING THE JOURNEY OF JESUS (PEACE BE ON HIM)
Route
0 100 200 300 400 500 miles

This, in brief, is the report given in *Rauzat-us-Safaa.* The author of the book, however, has also ascribed many an absurd and irrational miracle to Jesus, which I regret to leave aside, and keeping my account free from falsehood and senseless exaggerations, I turn to the real point at issue which leads to the conclusion that Jesus in the course of his travels, had arrived at Nasibain. Nasibain is a place between Mosul and Syria which, in English maps, has been shown as Nasibus. If one travels from Syria towards Persia, one would pass through Nasibain, which is at a distance of nearly 450 *koses*[31] from Jerusalem. Mosul is nearly 48 miles from Nasibain and 500 miles from Jerusalem. The frontier of Persia lies at a distance of a mere 100 miles from Mosul. This means that Nasibain is 150 miles from the frontier of Persia. The eastern frontier of Persia touches the town of Herat in Afghanistan. Herat lies on the western frontier of Afghanistan in the direction of the Persian territory and is about 900 miles from the western boundary of Persia. From Herat up to the Khyber Pass, the distance measures about 500 miles. The map showing the route followed by Jesus is given here. It shows the route taken by Jesus in his journey to Kashmir. The object of his journey was to meet the Israelites whom the king, Shalmaneser, had taken as captives to Media.*

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[31] This is a misprint in the first edition. It should be 450 miles not *koses.* (Translator)

* **Note:** There is a letter in the 14th section of the first chapter of the history in Greek of the 'Creed of Eusebeus', translated by a Londoner, Heinmer by name, in 1650 A.D., which shows that a king, Abgerus by name, invited Jesus from the land beyond the Euphrates, to his court. The letter sent by Abgerus to Jesus, and the reply to it, are full of fabrications and exaggerations. This much, however, seems to be true, that the king having been apprised of the cruelties of the Jews invited Jesus to his

It should be noticed that in the maps published by Christians, Media is shown towards the south of the Sea of Khizar (Azov), where today we find Persia. This means that Media was at any rate a part of the land which today constitutes Persia. The eastern frontier of Persia is adjacent to Afghanistan; there the sea is towards the south and the TurkishEmpire towards the west. If the report in the *Rauzat-us-Safaa* is correct, it appears that, by travelling to Nasibain, Jesus intended to go to Afghanistan through Persia, and to invite to the Truth the lost tribes of Jews who had come to be known as Afghans.* The word 'Afghan' appears to be of Hebrew origin; it is a derivative which means 'brave'. It appears that at the height of their victories, they adopted this name for themselves.

In short, Jesus came to the Punjab after passing through Afghanistan, with the ultimate intention of going to Kashmir after exploring the Punjab and Hindustan. It should be noted that Chitral and a strip of the Punjab separate Kashmir from Afghanistan. If one travels from Afghanistan to Kashmir, through the Punjab, one has to journey over a distance of 80 *koses* or about 130 miles, and via Chitral it would be 100 *koses*.[32]

Jesus, however, wisely took the route through

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court to give him refuge. The king probably believed that he was a true prophet. (Author)

* In the Torah there was a promise to the Jews, that if they believed in the 'last' prophet, they would, after passing through much suffering, have their own sovereign kings and rulers. That promise was fulfilled by the ten tribes of Israel adopting Islam. That is why there have been great kings among Afghans as well as among Kashmiris. (Author)

[32] 162 miles approximately. (Translator)

Afghanistan, so that the lost tribes of Israel, known as Afghans, might profit from his presence. The eastern frontier of Kashmir touches Tibet. From Kashmir, he could easily go to Tibet. Having come to the Punjab, he had no difficulty in wandering through the important places of Hindustan before going to Kashmir or Tibet. It is, therefore, quite possible, as some old historical records of this country bear out, that Jesus may have been to Nepal, Benares, and other places. He then must have gone to Kashmir through Jammu or Rawalpindi. As he belonged to a cold country, it is certain that he stayed in these parts only through the winter, and, by the end of March or the beginning of April, must have set out for Kashmir. As Kashmir resembles Shaam,[33] he must have taken up permanent residence in this land. It is also possible that he may have stayed for some time in Afghanistan and it is not improbable that he may even have married there. Since one of the tribes of Afghans is known as *Isa Khel*,[34] it would not be surprising if they were descendants of Jesus. It is to be regretted, however, that the history of Afghanistan is in a confused state. It is, therefore, difficult to arrive at anything definite by studying their tribal chronicles. There is no doubt, however, that the Afghans are Israelites, like the Kashmiris. Those who have taken a contrary view in their writings have been misled in the extreme; they do not seem to have studied the matter closely. The Afghans admit that they are the descendants of Qais and that Qais belongs to the house of Israel. It is, however, not necessary to elaborate the point

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[33] Syria and its neighbouring areas (Translator)
[34] After the name of Jesus (Isa). (Translator)

here. I have already dealt with this question at length in one of my books. Here, I am describing the journey of Jesus through Nasibain, Afghanistan, the Punjab and on to Kashmir and Tibet. It was on account of this long journey that he was named 'the travelling prophet', or even 'the leader of travellers.' A Muslim savant, Arif Billah Abi Bakr Muhammad bin Muhammad Ibn-ul-Walid Al-Fahri Al-Tartooshi Al-Maaliki, who is renowned for his learning, states about Jesus, on page 6 of his book *Siraaj-ul-Muluk,* published by the Khairiyah Press of Egypt in 1306 A.H.:

أين عيسى روح الله و كلمته رأس الزاهدين و إمام السائحين

Where is Isa, the Ruhullah, and the Kalimatullah, the leader of the righteous, and chief of travellers?

This means that Jesus was dead, and that even a great man like him had departed from this world. It should be noted that this learned authority calls Jesus not merely *'a traveller'* but *'the chief of travellers'*.

Likewise, on page 431 of *Lisaan-ul-Arab* it is stated:

قيل سمي عيسى بمسيح لأنه كان سائحا فى الأرض لا يستقر

Jesus was named 'Messiah', because he travelled about, and did not stay at one place.

The same is recorded in *Taajul-Urus Sharah Qaamus.* Therein it is also stated that the Messiah is one who has been blessed with innate righteousness and piety, so much so that even his touch is blessed and that God gave this name to Jesus because He gives it to whomsoever He pleases. Opposed to him is the so-called Messiah who is tainted with evil and accursedness. He is innately evil and accursed. His very touch results in evil, sinfulness, and imprecation. This name was, therefore, given to *Dajjal*, the Antichrist and to all those

who are like him. The two names, Messiah the Traveller and Messiah the Blessed, are not antagonistic to each other. One does not invalidate the other. For, it is a divine practice that God names a man in more than one way and all such names rightly apply to him. In short, Jesus being a traveller has been so well proved by Islamic history that if all the references were copied from those books, I am afraid they would run into a huge tome. What I have stated, therefore, should suffice.

Section Two

Evidence from Buddhist Records

Let it be clear that Buddhist Scriptures have made available to us various kinds of evidence, which, on the whole, is enough to prove that Jesus must have visited the Punjab, Kashmir, and other places. I have set down this evidence, so that all impartial readers may first study it, and then, by arranging it as a connected account in their minds, arrive at the aforesaid conclusion on their own. Here is the evidence. First: the titles given to the Buddha are similar to the titles given to Jesus. Likewise, the events of the life of Buddha resemble those of the life of Jesus. The reference here, however, is to the Buddhism of the areas within the boundaries of Tibet, like Leh, Lhasa, Gilgit and Hams, about which it is proved that they were visited by Jesus. With reference to the similarity of titles, it is enough to point out, that if, for example, Jesus calls himself the Light in his teachings, so has Gautama been called the Buddha in the Buddhistic literature which in Sanskrit means 'Light'. If Jesus has been called the Master in the Gospels, so has the

Buddha been called Saasta or the Master. If Jesus has been called Blessed in the Gospels, so has the Buddha been named Sugt—the Blessed. If Jesus has been called Prince, so has the Buddha been called Prince. Jesus has also been described in the Gospels as one who fulfils the object of his coming, so has the Buddha been called in Buddhistic Scriptures Siddhartha—one who fulfils the object of his coming. Jesus has also been called by the Gospels the refuge of the tired and the weary, so has the Buddha in Buddhistic Scriptures been called Asarn Sarn—the refuge of the refugeless. Jesus has also been called by the Gospels King, though he said that his was the kingdom of Heaven, so also has the Buddha been called the King. The similarity of events pertaining to both is also proved by events. Just as Jesus was tempted by the Devil with the riches and kingdoms of the world provided he made obeisance to him, so was Buddha tempted when the Devil said to him that he would give him the pomp and splendour of kings if he abandoned the austerity of his living and returned home. But, just as Jesus did not obey the Devil, so, it is recorded, the Buddha too did not obey him.[35] See *Buddhism* by T. W. Rhys Davids and *Buddhism* by Sir Monier Williams.*

This shows that the same titles which Jesus ascribes to himself in the Gospels, have been ascribed to the Buddha in Buddhistic Scriptures which were compiled much later; and just as Jesus was tempted by the Devil, so do these books claim that the Buddha was also tempted by the Devil;

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[35] See Appendix, extracts 1,2,3,4,5 (Translator)

* See *Chinese Buddhism* by Edkins, *Buddha* by Oldenberg translated by W. Hoey; *Life of Buddha* translated by Rockhill. (Author)

rather, the account of the temptation of the Buddha, as stated in these books, is even longer than the account of the temptation of Jesus. It is recorded that when the Devil offered him the temptation of wealth and kingly honour, the Buddha felt inclined to return home. He, nevertheless, did not succumb to the temptation. But the same Devil met him again one night, bringing with him all his progeny, and tried to frighten him by assuming frightfully grotesque shapes. To the Buddha, these Devils appeared like snakes which were emitting fire from their mouths. The snakes began to throw poison and fire at him but the poison turned into flowers and the fire formed a halo round the Buddha.

The Devil, not having succeeded so far, called upon sixteen of his daughters, and asked them to reveal their beauty to the Buddha who remained totally unmoved; and the Devil was baulked in his designs. He adopted a variety of other tricks, but was helpless against the steadfastness of the Buddha, who continued to rise higher and higher to different stages of spiritual eminence, and, after a long night, that is, after severe and protracted trials, he overcame his enemy, the Devil. The Light of True Knowledge dawned upon him and, with the break of day, as soon as his trials were over, he came to know all. The day this great battle ended was the day of the birth of Buddhism. Gautama was 35 years old at the time when he was called the Buddha[36] or the Light, and the Tree under which he was sitting at the time came to be known as the Tree of Light. Now, if you read the Gospels, you will find how closely the temptation of the Buddha resembles the temptation of Jesus to the

[36] See Appendix, extract 2. (Translator)

extent that the Buddha's age at the time was nearly the same as Jesus'. As it appears from Buddhist literature, the Devil did not appear to the Buddha in a corporeal and personified form. It was only a vision seen by the Buddha and the talk of the Devil was a satanic inspiration. The Devil, as he appeared to him, suggested to the Buddha that he should abandon his course and follow him and that if he did so, he would give him all the wealth of the world. Likewise, Christian scholars believe that the Devil who appeared to Jesus did not come to him in any corporeal form, like a human being, before the very eyes of the Jews, traversing the streets in his physical body and talking to Jesus so as to be audible to those present. On the contrary, the meeting was of the nature of a vision seen only by Jesus. The talk too was a kind of inspiration. As is the Devil's old wont, he put his evil intentions into Jesus' heart, which Jesus did not accept, and, like the Buddha, rejected all the Devil's temptations.

The question now arises as to why there was so much resemblance between the Buddha and Jesus. The Aryas in this connection say that Jesus, God forbid, became acquainted with Buddhism in the course of his journeys in India, and having acquired knowledge of the facts of Buddha's life, incorporated them in the Gospel on return to his native country; that Jesus composed his moral precepts by plagiarizing the moral teaching of the Buddha, and that just as the Buddha called himself the Light and Knowledge and adopted other titles, so did Jesus assume all such titles, so much so, that, even the long story of the Temptation of the Buddha was appropriated by him. This, however, is no more than a dishonest fabrication by the Aryas. It is quite

untrue that Jesus came to India before the event of the cross, for he did not need to undertake such a journey at the time. The need for it arose only after the Jews of Judea had rejected him and, as far as they were concerned, crucified him. He had, however, been saved by a subtle divine intervention. Jesus felt that he had done his duty in conveying the message to the Jews of that country, and that they did not deserve compassion anymore. Then, on being informed by God that the ten tribes of the Jews had migrated towards India, Jesus set out for those regions. As some of the Jews had accepted Buddhism, there was no alternative for this true prophet but to turn his attention to the followers of Buddhism. As the Buddhist priests of that country were waiting for the 'Messiah Buddha' to appear, they hailed Jesus as the Buddha considering all the signs like his titles, his moral teachings like 'love thine enemy' and 'do not resist evil,' and the Buddha's prophecy about fair skin. It is also possible that some of the titles and teachings and facts of Jesus' life may, consciously or unconsciously, have at that time been ascribed to the Buddha; for the early Indians never had any scruples about recording history objectively. The events of Buddha's life had not been recorded till the time of Jesus. Buddhist priests, therefore, had ample room to ascribe to the Buddha anything they wished. It is quite likely, therefore, that when they came to know of the facts of Jesus' life and his moral teaching, they mixed them up with many of their own innovations and ascribed them to the Buddha.* Presently I

* We cannot deny that the Buddhistic faith, from ancient times, has contained a large portion of moral teaching; but at the same time we

shall prove that the part of the moral teaching of Buddhism which resembles that of the Gospels, the titles like 'Light', which are attributed to the Buddha as they are to Jesus, and the Satanic temptations, are all details which were incorporated into the Buddhistic literature only after Jesus' visit to this country which took place after the crucifixion.

There is yet another resemblance between the Buddha and Jesus. Buddhist chronicles show that the Buddha during the temptation was fasting and that the fast lasted for forty days. Readers of the Gospels know that Jesus also observed a forty-day fast.

Anyone who is acquainted with the teachings of Buddha and Jesus will also marvel at the close resemblance and similarity between the moral teaching of the two. For example, the Gospels say, do not resist evil, love your enemy, live in poverty, and shun pride, falsehood and greed; the same is the teaching of the Buddha. Rather the Buddhistic teaching lays greater stress on it, so much so that the killing even of ants and insects has been considered a sin. The outstanding principle of Buddhism is sympathy for the whole world, seeking the welfare of the whole of humanity and of all the animals, and promotion of a spirit of unity and mutual love. The same is the teaching of the Gospels. Again, just as Jesus sent his disciples to different countries, journeying to one himself, so was the case with the Buddha. *Buddhism* by Sir Monier Williams[37] records that

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maintain that that part which is merely the teaching of the Gospels—the parables and other reproductions from the Bible -was undoubtedly added to the Buddhistic books at the time Jesus was in this country. (Author)

[37] See Appendix, extract 2. (Translator)

the Buddha sent out his disciples to preach, addressing them thus: 'Go forth and wander everywhere out of compassion for the world and for the service of gods and men. Go forth in different directions, go and preach total abstinence, piety and celibacy.' He said that he too would go and preach the same doctrine. Accordingly, the Buddha went to Benares and worked a number of miracles in that area. He delivered an impressive sermon on a hill just as Jesus had delivered his sermon on the mount. Again, the same book states that the Buddha preached mostly in parables; he used to explain spiritual phenomena in material terms.

Let it be remembered that this moral teaching and this mode of preaching—talking in parables—was the method of Jesus. This mode of preaching and this moral teaching, combined with other circumstantial evidence, at once suggest that all this was in imitation of Jesus. Jesus was here in India where he preached extensively. The followers of the Buddhist faith met him, and found him to be a holy and blessed man. They recorded these things in their books and even called him the Buddha, for it is part of human nature to try to acquire a good thing wherever one can find it. People try to record and remember any clever remark made by anyone they meet. It is, therefore, quite likely that the followers of the Buddhist Faith may have reproduced the entire picture of the Gospels in their books, as, for example, fasting for forty days both by Jesus and the Buddha; the Satanic temptation faced by both; the birth of both being without father; the moral teaching of both; each calling himself the Light; each calling himself Master and his companions disciples. Just as Matthew, chapter 10 verses 8

and 9, states: 'Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,' so did the Buddha command his disciples.[38] Just as the Gospels encourage celibacy, so does the teaching of the Buddha. Just as there was an earthquake after Jesus was put on the cross, so it is recorded, there was an earthquake at the death of the Buddha.*[39] All these points of resemblance arise from the basic fact of Jesus' visit to India. It was indeed a blessing for the followers of the Buddhist faith that he stayed among them for quite some time and they came to have a good knowledge of the facts of his life and of his noble teaching. It was, therefore, inevitable that a great part of his teaching and ceremonial rites should find way into Buddhist records because Jesus was held in great esteem by the Buddhists who had even pronounced him to be the Buddha. That is why they recorded his sayings in their books and ascribed them to Gautama Buddha.

Strangely enough, the Buddha, quite like Jesus, taught his disciples in parables, especially the ones contained in the Gospels. In one of these parables the Buddha says, "As the peasant sows the seed but cannot say the grain shall swell today or germinate tomorrow, so also is it with the disciple. He can't tell if he will germinate well or will be like the grain which is sown in rocky soil and dries up."

This, it will be noted, is the same parable which is still there in the Gospels. The Buddha, again, employed the parable: When a herd of deer prospers in a forest a man comes who opens for them a false path which leads to their death,

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[38] See Appendix, extract 2. (Translator)

* Buddhists also have a tradition similar to the Lord's Supper of the Christians. (Author)

[39] See Appendix, extract 1,2,3,4. (Translator)

that is to say he tries to lead them to a path which ultimately ensnares them brings them to death. And another comes who opens a safe path, that is to say he sows a field from which they can eat and he brings to them a canal so that they may drink thrive; such is the case with men who live in prosperity, the devil comes and opens the eightfold path of evil, so that they may perish. Then comes the Perfect Man and opens the eightfold path of truth, certainty, and peace, so that they will be saved.

The Buddha also taught that the righteousness is a safe treasure which no one can steal. It is a treasure which accompanies man even after death; it is a treasure which is the source of all Knowledge and all Perfection.

It should also be noted that this exactly is the teaching of the Gospels. It is also found in the ancient Buddhist books which belong to the period which is not much different from the time of Jesus; in fact it is the same period. Again, on page 135 of the same book, Buddha is reported to have said that he is so irreproachable that no one can point out a single blot on his character.[40] This too has a close resemblance to a saying of Jesus. *Buddhism*, on page 45, states: "The moral teaching of the Buddha has a striking resemblance with the Christian moral teaching."

I agree with this, and I also agree that both teachings tell us: Love not the world nor wealth; do not hate your enemies; do no evil; conquer evil with good; do to others as you wish to be done by them. All this shows so striking a resemblance between the Gospels and the teaching of the Buddha that it is unnecessary to go into any more detail.

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[40] See Appendix, extract 2. (Translator)

Buddhistic records also show that Gautama Buddha prophesied the coming of a second Buddha who would be named Metteyya. This prophecy is contained in *Laggavatti Suttatta*,[41] a Buddhist record to which reference is made on page 142 of Oldenberg's book. The prophecy reads thus:

> ***He will be the leader of a band of disciples numbering hundreds of thousands, as I am now the leader of bands of disciples, numbering hundreds.***[42]

It may be noticed here that the Hebrew word, Mashiha, is the same as the Pali, Metteyya. It is a matter of common knowledge that when a word is transferred from one language to another, it very often undergoes a phonetic change. An English word, too, when imported into another language, undergoes change: for example, Max Muller, in a list given on page 318 of Volume 11 of *Sacred Books of the East*, says: the *th* of the English alphabet becomes *s* in Persian or Arabic. Keeping these changes in view, one can readily understand that the word Messiah became Metteyya in the Pali language, which means that the future Metteyya prophesied by the Buddha is in reality the Messiah and no one else. This view is supported by the strong evidence of Buddha's own prophecy that the Faith he had founded would not endure in the world for more than five hundred years; that at the time of the decline of the faith and its teachings, the Metteyya would come to this land and re-establish the faith and its teachings in the world. Now we find that Jesus appeared five hundred years after the

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[41] According to Oldenberg it is spelled *Cakkavatti Suttanta*. See Appendix, extract 5. (Translator)

[42] See Appendix, extract 5. (Translator)

Buddha, and that just as the Buddha had fixed the time frame for the decline of his Faith, Buddhism did indeed deteriorate into a state of decadence as foretold. It was then that, having escaped from the cross, Jesus travelled to those parts, where the Buddhists recognised him readily and treated him with great reverence. There is no doubt that the moral teaching and spiritual exercises taught by the Buddha were resuscitated by Jesus. Christian historians admit that the Sermon on the Mount as reported in the Gospels and the rest of his moral teachings are the same as those preached to the world by the Buddha five hundred years before. They also state that the Buddha not only taught moral precepts, he also taught other great truths. In their view, the title of 'the Light of Asia' applied to the Buddha is highly appropriate. Now, in accordance with the prophecy of the Buddha, Jesus appeared five hundred years after him, and as admitted by most Christian scholars, his teaching was the same as the teaching of the Buddha. There is no doubt, therefore, that he appeared in the 'spirit' of the Buddha. In Oldenberg's book, on the authority of *Lakkavatti Suttatta*,[43] it is stated that the followers of the Buddha, looking forward to his future coming, were sustained by the hope that as disciples of the Metteyya, they would have the bliss of salvation. They were certain that the Metteyya would come and that they would attain salvation through him, for, the words in which the Buddha had held out the hope for the coming of the Metteyya positively showed that his disciples would meet and acknowledge him. The statement of the

[43] According to Oldenberg it is spelled *Cakkavatti Suttanta*. See Appendix, extract 5. (Translator)

above-mentioned book further reinforces the conviction that for the guidance of those people God had created two appropriate circumstances: Firstly, by virtue of the title Asif, mentioned in Genesis 3:10,[44] which means 'one who rallies a people', it was inevitable that Jesus should visit the land to which the Jews had migrated and settled; secondly, in accordance with the prophecy of the Buddha, it was necessary that the followers of the Buddha should meet Jesus and profit from him spiritually. Considering both these points together, it looks almost certain that Jesus must have visited Tibet. The fact that Christian teaching and ritual have so deeply influenced Tibetan Buddhism necessitates the belief that Jesus must have visited the Tibetan people also. Moreover, the fact that the zealous followers of Buddhism, as stated in Buddhistic records, had always eagerly expected to meet him, cries out aloud that this desire on their part had become the prelude to Jesus' visit to this country. In the face of both these facts, an impartial person has no need to search through Buddhistic records to discover for himself the statement that Jesus did in fact come to Tibet. For, in accordance with the prophecy of the Buddha, the desire for the Buddha's second advent being so strong, the prophecy itself must have attracted Jesus to Tibet. It must be noted that the word 'Metteyya' so frequently mentioned in Buddhistic books undoubtedly means 'Messiah'. On page 14 of the book, *Tibet, Tartary, Mongolia,* by H. T. Prinsep, it is stated concerning Metteya Buddha, which in reality is Messiah, that the first Christian

[44] The sense of the quotation is correct but it seems there is a misprint in the first edition. Please read 49:10 instead of 3:10 (Translator)

missionaries, having heard and seen at first hand conditions obtaining in Tibet, came to the conclusion that in the ancient books of the Lamas there were to be found traces of the Christian religion. Again, on the same page, it is stated that there is no doubt about it that these ancient authorities believed that the disciples of Jesus were still alive when the Christian teaching reached this place. On page 171 it is stated that there is not the slightest doubt that at that time everybody was eagerly waiting for the great Saviour to appear. Tacitus says that it was not only the Jews who were responsible for this belief, but Buddhism itself had laid the foundation for it, i.e., it prophesied the coming of the Metteya. Furthermore, the author of this English work says in a note: The books *Pitakattayan* and *Attha-Katha* contain the clear prophecy concerning the appearance of yet another Buddha, whose advent would take place a thousand years after the time of Gautama or 'Sakhiya Muni'. Gautama himself states, that he is the 25th Buddha and that the 'Bagwa Metteyya' is still to appear, that is, after he has gone, one whose name will be Metteyya who will be fair-skinned will come. The English author goes on to say that the word Metteyya has a striking resemblance to Messiah.[45] In short, Gautama Buddha clearly states in this prophecy that there would arise a Messiah in *his* country, among *his* people and *his* followers. That is why the followers of Buddhism had all the time been waiting for the Messiah to appear in their country. The Buddha, in his prophecy, mentioned him as 'Bagwa Metteyya' because 'Bagwa' in Sanskrit means 'white', and Jesus, being an inhabitant of the Syrian

[45] See Appendix, extract 6 (Translator)

territory, was fair-skinned. The people of the land where this prophecy was announced, i.e., the people of Magadh, in which was located Rajagriha, were dark-skinned. Gautama Buddha himself was dark. He had narrated to his followers two conclusive signs regarding the future Buddha.

i. He would be 'Bagwa' or of fair skin.
ii. He would be 'Metteyya', a traveller, and that he would come from a foreign land.

People, therefore, constantly looked out for these signs till they actually saw Jesus. Every Buddhist must necessarily profess the belief that five hundred years after the Buddha, the Bagwa Metteyya did, in fact, appear in their land.* It should not be surprising, therefore, if books of the Buddhist faith should mention the coming of the Metteyya—the Masiha—to their land, and of the fulfilment of Buddha's prophecy. Supposing there is no such mention, even then, because on the basis of divine revelation, the Buddha had communicated to his disciples the tiding that the Bagwa Metteyya would come to their land, no Buddhist who was cognizant of this prophecy could deny the coming to this land of the Bagwa Metteyya, whose other name was Masiha; because the non-fulfillment of the prophecy would have meant the falsity of the faith itself. If this prophecy, for whose fulfilment a time frame had been fixed, and which Gautama Buddha had communicated to his disciples again and again, had not been fulfilled at its appointed time, his followers would have begun to doubt the truth of his claim that he was the Buddha. Also, it would have been placed on

* The period of a thousand or five thousand years is incorrect. (Author)

record that this prophecy had not been fulfilled. Another argument in support of the fulfilment of this prophecy is that books belonging to the seventh century A.D. were discovered in Tibet, in which the word 'Mashih' figures out prominently, which means Jesus[as], and it is written as Mi-Shi-Hu. The compiler of the list which contained the word Mi-Shi-Ho is a Buddhist. (Vide *A record of the Buddhist Religion* by I. Tsing, translated by G. Takakusu.) This Takakusu is a Japanese who has translated I. Tsing's book, and I. Tsing is a Chinese traveller. On the margin and in the appendix to the book Takakusu states that an ancient book contains the name Mi-Shi-Ho[46] (Masih). This book belongs approximately to the seventh century..... It was recently translated by the Japanese, G. Takakusu,* published by Clarendon Press, Oxford. The book in any case contains the word Mashih which shows with certainty that this word was not imported by the Buddhists from outside; rather, it was borrowed from the prophecy of the Buddha and was written sometimes as Mashih and sometimes as Bagwa Metteyya.

Apart from the testimonies, we have found in Buddhistic chronicles, there is one recorded by Sir Monier Williams, on page 45 of his book *Buddhism*. He says that the sixth disciple of the Buddha was a man named 'Yasa'.[47] The name is Yasu or Yasa for short. As Jesus appeared five hundred years after the death of the Buddha, sometime in the sixth century, he was called the sixth disciple. It should be noted

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[46] See Appendix, extract 7 (Translator)

* See pages 169 and 223 of this book. (Author)

[47] See Appendix, extract 2. (Translator)

that Professor Max Muller, on page 517 of the October 1894 issue of his periodical *The Nineteenth Century*, supports the aforesaid statement and says that established and renowned writers have pointed out many a time that Jesus was influenced by the principles of Buddhism and that attempts are being made even today to discover some historical route along which the principles of the Buddha's faith could be proved to have reached Palestine in the days of Jesus.[48] This observation by Max Muller corroborates the Buddhistic records in which it is claimed in as many words that Yasa was the disciple of the Buddha. When Christians of such repute as Professor Max Muller admit that the principles of Buddhism had certainly influenced Jesus, it would not be far wrong to say that this would amount to his being a disciple of the Buddha. Nevertheless, we consider the use of such a title in respect of Jesus disrespectful and impertinent. The statement found in the Buddhist literature that Yasu was the disciple of the Buddha, is only an example of the age-old habit of Buddhist priests to designate a great personage appearing at a later date as if he were the disciple of his prototype. Apart from this, as has been pointed out, there being great resemblance between the teachings of Jesus and those of the Buddha, it would not be wrong to speak of their relationship as that of the master and the disciple, though such thinking is very irreverent. Nevertheless, we do not approve of the way the European investigators are eager to prove that the teachings of Buddhism had reached Palestine in the days of Jesus. It is, indeed, unfortunate that when the name and mention of

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[48] See Appendix, extract 8. (Translator)

Jesus are found in the ancient books of Buddhism, these investigators should adopt the dubious course of trying to find traces of Buddha's faith in Palestine. Why should they not search for the blessed footprints of Jesus on the rocky soil of Nepal, Tibet, and Kashmir? I know, however, that these researchers could never be expected to uncover the truth which was lying hidden under a thousand veils of darkness; it was for God to do it. He watched from on high that man-worship was running rampant the world over, and worship of the cross and the supposed sacrifice of a human being had alienated the hearts of millions of people from the true God. In His indignation, He sent to the world his servant in the spirit of Jesus of Nazareth, to demolish the creed of the cross. And he did come as the Promised Messiah in accordance with the old prophecies. Then at long last came the time for the breaking of the cross, the time when the error of the creed of the cross was to be exposed beyond any doubt quite like a piece of wood torn asunder. Heaven has now thrown open the way for the demolition of the cross, so that the seeker after truth may look around and investigate. True, the physical ascension of Jesus to heaven was a misnomer; nevertheless, it had a significance of its own. The truth about the life of the Messiah had been forgotten and lost, as a corpse is eaten up by the earth and is no more; but in heaven he had an existence of his own and was present like a disembodied human spirit. It was inevitable, therefore, that this reality should finally descend to the earth in the latter days and assume the form of a living human being. This Messianic reality has indeed descended to the earth in this age in the shape of a living human being. It has broken the cross and dispelled the evils

of falsehood and its worship. The Holy Prophet[sa] in a *Hadith* about the cross has compared these evils to the swine. They have now been killed just as swine are killed. It is wrong to interpret this *Hadith* to mean that the Promised Messiah would kill the infidels and break crosses. In reality, the breaking of the cross means that at the time, God of Heaven and Earth would reveal the hidden Truth and, all of a sudden, the entire structure of the cross would collapse. The killing of swine does not mean the killing of men or of swine, but the killing of swinish qualities like persistent falsehood and flaunting it with impunity, which is like eating excrement. Just as dead swine cannot eat dirt, so, there would come a time—in fact, it has already come—when evil would be prevented from gorging on this kind of dirt. Muslim clerics, the *Ulama*, have been grossly mistaken in the interpretation of this prophecy of the Holy Prophet[sa]. The true meaning of the breaking of the cross and of the killing of the swine are the ones we have already mentioned. If the *Mahdi* and the Messiah were supposed to go on a killing spree, what will become of the other prophecy which says that at the time of the Promised Messiah, religious wars will be brought to an end and Heaven will radiate such resplendent truths as will clearly differentiate between right and wrong. Do not think, therefore, that I have come to wield the sword. No, I have come to put all swords back into their sheaths. The world has been groping in the dark for far too long. Many have conspired against their well-wishers, wounded the hearts of true friends, and hurt their dear ones. But now darkness shall be no more. Night is gone and the day has dawned. Blessed is he who remains not deprived any more!

Among the testimonies contained in Buddhist records is the evidence mentioned on page 419 of *Buddhism* by Oldenberg. It is recorded on the authority of the book named *Mahavagga* (page 54 section 1) that a man called Rahulta[49] was a successor to the Buddha. This Rahulta has been described not only as his devoted disciple, but also as his son. I am convinced that Rahulta of Buddhistic records is none other than Ruhullah, which is one of Jesus' titles and reads as Rahulta due to phonetic variation. To say that Rahulta was the son of the Buddha, who abandoned his child in infancy, went into exile and, wishing to part from his wife for good, left her asleep without informing her or saying farewell, and fled to some other land, is altogether absurd and derogatory to the high spiritual station of the Buddha. It portrays him as a cruel and hard-hearted man who had no compassion for his poor wife and left her asleep and slunk away like a thief without saying a word of consolation to her. He altogether ignored the duties he owed to her as a husband, neither divorcing her nor asking her permission to proceed on an endless journey, wounded her heart by disappearing so suddenly and did not care to send her even a single letter and took no pity on his child who grew up to manhood in his absence. Could such a man, who had no respect for the morals he taught his disciples, be righteous? Conscience refuses to accept this story, just as it refuses to accept the story of the Gospels that once Jesus failed to show regard for his mother, that he did not attend to her when she called on him and uttered words which were disrespectful.

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[49] Also known as Rahula. See Appendix, extract 5. (Translator)

So although the two stories about hurting the feelings of a wife and a mother have a mutual resemblance, yet we cannot ascribe such stories as do not size up to the lowest level of moral conduct either to Jesus or to Gautama Buddha. If the Buddha loved not his wife, had he no pity on a poor woman and her suffering child either? It is so serious a lapse of moral conduct that I am shocked even to think of this story which is hundreds of years old and belongs to the dead past. Why at all should he have misbehaved like this? To be a bad man, it is enough to be callous towards one's wife, unless she be immoral, disobedient, faithless, or hostile to her husband. We cannot, therefore, ascribe such offensive behaviour to the Buddha, which militates against his own teachings. All this shows that the story is false. In point of fact, 'Rahulta' means Jesus, whose other name is 'Ruhullah'. The word 'Ruhullah' in Hebrew comes close to Rahulta, and 'Rahula', or, 'Ruhullah', has been described as a disciple of the Buddha because, as I have already stated, that Jesus came after the Buddha and brought a dispensation similar to that of the Buddha. That is why the followers of the Buddhist faith declared that the Buddha was the source of the teachings of Jesus, and that Jesus was one of his disciples. It should not be surprising if the Buddha, on the basis of revelation from God, should have declared Jesus to be his 'son'. Another important piece of circumstantial evidence is that in the same book it is recorded that when the infant Rahulta was separated from his mother, a woman whose name was Magdaliyana, and who was a follower of the Buddha acted as the intermediary. It may be noted that the name Magdaliyana is in reality a corrupt form of the name Magdalena, a female

follower of Jesus mentioned in the Gospels.

All this evidence, which has been briefly given, should lead an unbiased mind to the conclusion that Jesus must have visited this country. Regardless of all these certain and sure grounds, no intelligent person can afford to disregard the similarity to be found between the teachings and the ceremonial rites of Buddhism and those of Christianity, especially in Tibet. This resemblance is so close and striking that most Christian researchers believe that Buddhism is the Christianity of the East, and Christianity the Buddhism of the West.[50] Isn't it strange that Jesus said, 'I am the Light and the Way', so said the Buddha. The Gospels call Jesus the Saviour, the Buddha too calls himself the Saviour (see *Lalta Wasatra*). In the Gospels, it is stated that Jesus had no father, and about the Buddha too it is stated that he was born without a father,[51] although apparently, just as Jesus had a foster father Joseph, so had the Buddha a foster father. Similarly, it is stated that a star appeared at the time of the Buddha's birth. Also there is the story of Solomon ordering the cutting of the child in two halves and giving each half to the two women; an exactly similar episode is to be found in the Buddha's *Jataka*.[52] In addition to showing that Jesus did come to this country, it shows that the Jews who had migrated to this land had also established close ties with Buddhism.

The Buddhistic account of the Creation is the same as the one given in the Torah. According to the Torah man is

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[50] See Appendix, extract 9. (Translator)

[51] See Appendix, extract 3. (Translator)

[52] Stories of the Buddha's former births found in Buddhist literature. (Translator)

considered superior to woman, so is a monk in the religion of the Buddha considered superior to a nun. The Buddha did, however, believe in the transmigration of souls, but his view of transmigration is not opposed to the teaching of the Gospels. According to the Buddha, transmigration is of three kinds:

i. The conduct and courage of a man demands that after death he should be given some kind of a new body.

ii. The kind of transmigration, which the Tibetans believe is peculiar to the Lamas. It means that part of the spirit of some Buddha or Buddha Satwas transmigrates into the Lama for the time being which means that his power, temper and spiritual qualities are transferred into the Lama and begin to animate the recipient.

iii. That in this very life man goes through different creations until on account of his moral qualities he becomes an authentic human being. But before that a time may come when he is, figuratively speaking, a bull; when he grows in greed and evil, he becomes a veritable dog, the first existence giving place to the next, corresponding to the quality of his actions. All these 'metamorphoses', however, take place in this very life. This kind of creed is not opposed to the teaching of the Gospels.

I have already stated that the Buddha also believes in the existence of the Devil; he also believes in heaven and hell, in angels and in the Day of Judgment. The charge that the Buddha did not believe in God, is a pure fabrication. However, he did not believe in Vedanta[53] and in the corporeal gods of the Hindus. He was an acute critic of the

[53] The Vedic concept and philosophy of the Divine. (Translator)

Vedas, and did not believe in the truth of the existing Vedas; he believed that they had been corrupted and tampered with. The period during which he was a Hindu and follower of the Vedas, he regarded as the period of evil birth. For example, he hints that for a time he was a monkey, again for a time an elephant, then a deer, a dog, four times a snake, a sparrow, a frog, twice a fish, ten times a tiger, four times a fowl, twice a pig, and once a hare. When he was a hare he used to teach the monkeys, the jackals, and the water dogs. Again, he says that he was once a ghost, once a woman, and once a dancing Devil. All these hints are meant to point to phases of his life as were full of cowardice, effeminacy, impurity, savagery, profligacy, gluttony, and superstition. It appears that in point of fact, his confessions pertain to the time when he was a follower of the Vedas, for, after rejecting them he gives no hint of any evil still clinging to him. On the contrary, he makes great claims. He said that he had become a manifestation of God and had attained *Nirvana*.[54] The Buddha also states that the man who leaves the world accompanied by evil deeds is thrown into hell. Sentinels of hell drag him to the supreme guardian of hell, called Yamah, and the condemned one is asked whether or not he had seen the following Five Messengers who had been sent to warn him:

i. Childhood,

ii. Old age,

iii. Disease,

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[54] According to Buddhist teaching, Nirvana is the state of perfect bliss attained when the soul is freed from all suffering and absorbed into the supreme spirit. (Translator)

iv. Being punished during one's life as evidence of the punishment in the hereafter,

v. Corpses which remind us of the transitory nature of the world.

The condemned one replies that he had been a fool and that he had not thought over any of these things. The guardians of hell will drag him to the torture chamber and secure him with red-hot iron chains. The Buddha, moreover, says that hell has several zones where sinners of different categories will be cast. In short, all this teaching cries out aloud that the Buddhist religion is to a large extent indebted to the personal example and influence of Jesus.I do not like to elaborate the point further, and should close the section here, because the prophecy about the coming of Jesus to this country has been so clearly spelled out in Buddhist literature; nor can it be denied that the parables and the moral teaching of the Gospels are positively to be found in Buddhist books compiled in Jesus' time. These two points considered together do not leave any doubt about the coming of Jesus to this country. The evidence, therefore, which we wanted to find in Buddhistic records has been discovered in full. God be thanked.

Section Three

Evidence from Historical Writings which Show that Jesus' Journey to the Punjab and Neighbouring Territories was Inevitable

The question naturally arises as to why Jesus, after his escape from the cross, should have come to this country and

what could have induced him to take such a long journey? This question requires a little detailed answer and should, therefore, receive a little fuller treatment in the present volume.

Let it be noted, therefore, that it was extremely necessary, by reason of his office as divine messenger, for Jesus to have journeyed to the Punjab and its neighbourhood because the ten tribes of Israel, who in the Gospels have been called the lost sheep of Israel, had migrated to this country. It is a fact which no historian has been able to deny. It was necessary, therefore, that Jesus should have journeyed to this country and, after finding the lost sheep, should have conveyed to them the divine message vouchsafed to him. Had he not done so, the purpose for which he had been sent by God would have remained unfulfilled. His mission was to preach to the lost sheep of Israel. His passing away from the world without seeking the lost sheep, or, after finding them, failing to teach them the way to salvation, would have been quite like the case of a man who had been charged by his king to go to a desert tribe to dig a well and supply them with water, but who goes instead to some other place where he spends three or four years, taking no steps to search for the concerned tribe. Does such a man carry out the command of the king? Not in the least. The man cares not for that tribe, he merely looks to his own comfort.

If, however, it is asked, how and why it should be supposed that the ten tribes of Israel had come to this country, the answer is that the supporting evidence of this thesis is so strong and incontrovertible that even a dullard will not deny it. It is too well known that people like the Afghans and the old inhabitants of Kashmir are in fact of

Israelite origin. For example, the people of Alai Kohistan which is at a distance of two or three days' journey from the district of Hazara, have called themselves Beni Israel from time immemorial. Similarly, there is another hilly tract in this region known as Kala Dakah, whose inhabitants also take pride in being of Israelite origin. Then in the Hazara district itself, there is a tribe which claims to belong to the house of Israel. Similarly, the inhabitants of the mountain range between Chillas and Kabul also call themselves Israelites. Dr. Bernier's view about the people of Kashmir, which is based on the authority of some English scholars, and is expressed in the second part of his book *Travels,* is only too true. According to him, the Kashmiri people are the descendants of Israel; their dress, their features and some of their rituals conclusively point to the fact that they are undoubtedly of Israelite origin.[55] An Englishman, Forster by name, writes in his book that during his stay in Kashmir he felt as if he was living amidst a tribe of the Jews.[56] H. W. Bellews C.S.I. in his book *The Races of Afghanistan,* published by Thacker Spink & Co. Calcutta, states that the Afghans came from Syria. Nebuchadnezzar took them prisoner and settled them in Persia and Media, from whence at a later date they moved to the East and settled in the Ghor hills, where they were known as Beni Israel. In proof of this there is the prophecy of the Prophet Idris (Enoch), which says that the ten tribes of Israel who were taken prisoner, escaped from captivity and took refuge in the territory called Arsarah which appears to be another name of the area

[55] See Appendix, extract 10. (Translator)
[56] See Appendix, extract 11. (Translator)

known as Hazara today, part of the region being called Ghor. In *Tabaqaat-i-Naasri,* there is an account of the conquest of Afghanistan by Genghis Khan. It is stated that in the times of the Shabnisi dynasty there lived a tribe known as Beni Israel, some of whom were big businessmen and good traders. In 622 A.D., which is the year of the Holy Prophet Muhammad's[sa] Call, these people were to be found in the eastern part of Herat. A Quraish chief Khalid bin Walid brought to them the tidings of the Prophet's Coming with a view to bringing them under the banner of the Divine Messenger[sa]. Five or six chiefs were elected to accompany him, of whom the principal chief was Qais, whose other name was Kish. After accepting Islam, these people fought bravely for the cause of Islam and made many conquests. The Holy Prophet[sa] gave them many presents on their return journey, blessed them, and prophesied that they would attain great power and ascendancy. The Holy Prophet[sa] also prophesied that the chiefs of this tribe would always be known as Maliks. He gave Qais the name of Abdul Rashid and conferred upon him the title *Pahtaan*. Afghan writers say that this is a Syriac word which means a rudder. As the newly converted Qais was, like the rudder of a ship, a guide to his tribe, he was awarded the title *Pahtaan*.

It is not known at what point of time the Afghans of Ghor advanced farther and came to settle in the territory around Kandhar, which is their home today. This happened probably in the first century of the Islamic calendar. The Afghans maintain that Qais married the daughter of Khalid bin Walid, by whom he had three sons whose names were Saraban, Patan, and Gurgasht. Saraban had two sons, called

Sacharj Yun, and Karsh Yun. It is their descendants who are today known as the Afghans or Beni-Israel. The people of Asia-Minor, and Muslim historians of the West, call Afghans *Sulaimanis*.[57]

In *The Cyclopaedia of India, Eastern and Southern Asia*, by Edward Balfour, Vol. III,[58] it is stated that the Jewish people are spread all over the central, southern, and eastern regions of Asia. In early times these people were settled in large numbers in China; they had a synagogue at Yih Chu, the headquarter of the district of Shu. Dr. Wolf, who wandered for a long time in search of the ten lost tribes of Beni Israel, is of the opinion that if Afghans are the progeny of Jacob, they belong to the tribes of Yahuda and Bin Yamin. Another report proves that the Jews were exiled to Tartary; they were found in large numbers in the territories round about Bukhara, Merv and Khiva. Prester John, Emperor of Tartary, in his letter to Alexis Comminus, the Emperor of Constantinople, writing about his dominions, says that beyond the river Amu there are the ten tribes of Israel who, though they claim to be under their own king, are in reality his subjects and vassals. Dr. Moore's researches show that the Tartar tribe named Chosan is of Jewish origin and that among them are to be found traces of the ancient Jewish faith. For example, they still practise the rite of circumcision. The Afghans have a tradition that they are the ten lost tribes of Israel. After the sack of Jerusalem, the king Nebuchadnezzar took them prisoner and settled them in Ghor, near Bamiyan. Before the arrival of Khalid bin Walid

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[57] See Appendix, extract 12. (Translator)

[58] It should be volume I, third edition. (Translator)

they had consistently held fast to the Jewish faith.

In appearance, the Afghans resemble the Jews in all respects. Like them, the younger brother marries the widow of the elder brother. A French traveller, Ferrier by name, who passed through Herat, states that Israelites are found in large numbers in that territory, and that they have full liberty in the practice of their religion.[59] The Rabbi Bin Yamin of Toledo, Spain in the twelfth century A.D. ventured out in search of the lost tribes. He states that these Jews are settled in China, Iran and Tibet. Josephus, who wrote the ancient history of the Jews in 93 A.D., in the course of his account of the Jews who escaped from bondage along with the Prophet Ezra, states in his eleventh book that the ten tribes were settled beyond the Euphrates even at that time, and that their numbers were uncountable.[60] By 'beyond the Euphrates' he meant Persia and the eastern territories. St. Jerome who lived in the fifth century A.D., writing about Prophet Hosea says in the margin, in support of his thesis, that since that day the ten tribes (of the Israelites) have been under king Parthya or Paras, and have not been released from bondage. In the first volume of the same book, it is stated that Count Juan Steram testifies on page 233-34 of his book that the Afghans admit that Nebuchadnezzar, after the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem, exiled them to the territory of Bamiyan (which is adjacent to Ghor, in Afghanistan).

On page 166 of the book, *A Narrative of a Visit to Ghuzni, Kabul and Afghanistan* by G. T. Vigne, F.G.S. (1840), it is

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[59] See Appendix, extract 13,14,15. (Translator)
[60] See Appendix, extract 16. (Translator)

stated that one Mullah Khuda Dad quoted in his presence from a book called *Majma-ul-Ansaab*, that the eldest son of Jacob was Judas, whose son was Usrak; Usrak's son was Aknur; Aknur's son was Maalib; Maalib's Farlai; Farlai's Qais, Qais' Talut; Talut's Armea, and Armea's son was Afghan whose descendants are the Afghan people and after whom the latter are named. Afghan, a contemporary of Nebuchadnezzar, was known as a descendant of Israel, and had forty sons. In the 34th generation of his genealogical tree, after some 2000 years, was born Qais who lived in the time of the Holy Prophet Muhammadsa. His descendants multiplied down to 64 generations.[61] Afghan's eldest son, Salm, migrated from his Syrian home and settled in Ghor Mashkoh, near Herat, and his descendants spread into Afghanistan.[62]

In *A cyclopedia of Geography* by James Bryce, F.G.S. (London, 1856), on page 11, it is stated that the Afghans trace their genealogy to Saul, the Israelite King, and call themselves the descendants of Israel. Alexander Burns says that the Afghans state that they are of Jewish origin; that the King of Babel captured them and settled them in the territory of Ghor which lies to the northwest of Kabul; that up to 622 A.D. they continued to hold on to the Jewish faith, but that Khalid bin Abdullah (Abdullah has been written mistakenly instead of Walid) married the daughter of a chief of this tribe and made them accept Islam in that year.[63]

On page 39 of Col. G. B. Malleson's book *History of*

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[61] It should be read as 66. (Translator)
[62] See Appendix, extract 17. (Translator)
[63] See Appendix, extract 18. (Translator)

Afghanistan (London 1878), it is stated that Abdullah Khan of Herat, the French traveller named Ferrier, and Sir William Jones, a recognised orientalist, agree that the Afghan people are descended from the Beni-Israel, and that they are the descendants of the ten lost tribes.[64] The book *History of the Afghans*, by G. P. Ferrier,[65] translated by Capt. William Jesse, and published in London (1858), records on page 1 that the majority of oriental historians are of the opinion that the Afghan people are the descendants of the ten tribes of Israel and that the Afghans too hold the same opinion. The same historian says on page 4 of this book, that Afghans possess evidence that at Peshawar, during his invasion of India, Nadir Shah was presented by the chiefs of the Yoosoofzyes tribe with a Bible written in Hebrew as well as several other articles preserved by their families for the performance of religious rites of their old faith. There were also Jews in Nadir Shah's camp, who, on seeing the articles, readily recognised them. Again, the same historian states on page 4 of his book that in his opinion Abdullah Khan's view is highly reliable. Briefly stated this view is as follows: Malek Thalut (Saul) had two sons, Afghan and Djalut. Afghan was the patriarch of these people. After the reigns of David and Solomon, the Israelite tribes started fighting one another. As a result, each tribe became separated from the other. This state of affairs continued up to the time of Nebuchadnezzar who invaded and killed 70,000 Jews. He sacked the city, and took the remaining

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[64] See Appendix, extract 19. (Translator)

[65] This should be J.P. Ferrier (Joseph Pierre Ferrier). In Urdu *J* (جے) was written as *G* (جی) because, at the time of the author, not much distinction was made between ی and ے. (Translator)

Jews with him to Babel as prisoners. After this catastrophe, the children of Afghan fled in fear from Judea to Arabia and remained there for a long time. But as water and land were scarce, and man and beast suffered great hardship, they decided to migrate to India. A party of Abdalees remained in Arabia, and during the Khilafat of Hadhrat Abu Bakr one of their chiefs established matrimonial relationship with Khalid bin Walid.... When Iran fell to Arabia, these people migrated from Arabia and settled in the Iranian provinces of Fars and Kirman. They stayed there till Genghis Khan's invasion. As the Abdalees were helpless against the atrocities of Genghis Khan, they left for India via Makran, Sindh and Multan. But here too they couldn't find peace. They eventually arrived at Koh Sulaiman and settled there. The other members of the Abdali tribe also joined them. They consisted of 24 tribes, all descendants of Afghan who had three sons, Tsera-Bend (Saraban), Arkash (Argoutch) and Karlen (Batan). They had eight sons each who multiplied into twenty-four tribes, each tribe was named after each son. The names of the sons and the tribes are given below:[66]

Sons of Tsera-Bend	**Name of tribe**
Abdal	Abdalees
Yoosoof	Yoosoofzyes
Baboor	Baboorees
Wezir	Wezirees
Lohooan	Lohooanees

[66] See Appendix, extract 20. (Translator)

Beritch	Beritchees
Khooguian	Khooguianees
Chiran	Chiranees

Sons of Gargasht (Arkash)

Ghildj	Ghildjzyes
Kauker	Kaukerees
Djumourian	Djumourianees
Storian	Storianees
Pen	Penees
Kass	Kassees
Takan	Takanees
Nassar	Nassarees

Sons of Kerlen

Khattak	Khattakees
Soor	Soorees
Afreed	Afreedees
Toor	Toorees
Zaz	Zazees
Bab	Babees
Benguech	Benguechees
Lendeh-poor	Lendeh-poorees

The book, Makhzan-i-Afghani* by Khawaja Nimatullah

* See page 3 of preface by the author. This book is a summary of authentic chronicles like Tarikh-e-Tibri, Majma-ul-Ansaab, Gazida Jahankushai, Matla-ul-Anwaar and Maadan-e-Akbar. (Author)

of Herat, was written in 1018 Hijra during the reign of the Emperor Jahangir, and was translated and published by Prof. Bernhard Doran of Kharkov University in 1836 in London. It contains the following statements in the chapters mentioned below:

In chapter 1 there is the history of Jacob Israel with whom starts the genealogy of the Afghans.

In chapter II there is the history of King Talut, the genealogy of the Afghans is traced to Talut. On pages 22 and 23 it is stated: Talut had two sons, Berkhia and Ermiah. Berkhia had a son, Asif and Ermiah's Afghan and on page 24 it is stated that Afghan had twenty-four[67] sons and no one among the Israelites could compare in numbers with the descendants of Afghan. On page 65[68] it is stated that Bokhtnasser[69] occupied the whole of *Sham* (Syria), etc., exiled the Israelite tribes and forced them to settle in the mountainous regions of Ghor, Ghazneen, Kabul, Candahar and Koh Firoz, where the descendants of Asif and Afghan particularly took up their abode.

The third chapter contains the statement that when Bokhtnasser expelled the Israelites from Syria, some tribes who were the descendants of Asif and Afghan took refuge in Arabia. The Arabs used to address them as Beni Israel and Beni Afghan.[70]

On pages 37 and 38 of the same book, on the authority of

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[67] It should be read as 'forty', as is stated in extract 21 of the Appendix. (Translator)

[68] This is a misprint, to be read as page 25. See Appendix, extract 21. (Translator)

[69] Nebuchadnezzar (Translator)

[70] Meaning the children of Israel and the children of Afghan. (Translator)

the author of *Majma'ul Ansaab*, and that of Mestoufi, the author of *Taareekh Gozeeda*, it is stated that in the lifetime of the Holy Prophet[sa], Khalid bin Walid invited the Afghans to Islam, who, after Bokhtnasser's invasion, had taken up residence in the Ghor territory. The Afghan chiefs under the leadership of Qais, who was Talut's descendant in the 37th generation, came to pay their homage to the Holy Prophet[sa]. Qais was named Abdul Rashid by the Holy Prophet[sa] (Here the genealogy of Abdul Rashid Qais is traced back to Talut—Saul). The Holy Prophet[sa] also conferred the title of Pathan on the chiefs which means 'ship's rudder'. After some time the chiefs returned to their territory and began to preach Islam.

In the same book *Makhzan-i-Afghani* on page 63, it is recorded that Farid-ud-Din Ahmad makes the following statement concerning the titles Beni Afghanah or Beni Afghan, in his book *Risalah Ansaab-i-Afghaniyyah:* After Nebuchadnezzar, the Magian, had subjugated the Israelites, conquered the Syrian territories and sacked Jerusalem, he took the Israelites prisoners and exiled them as slaves. He took away with him several of their tribes who followed the Mosaic Law, and ordered them to renounce their ancestral faith and to worship him instead of God, which they refused to do. Consequently, Nebuchadnezzar put to death two thousand of the most intelligent and the wisest from among them and ordered the rest to leave his kingdom and Syria. Some of them left Nebuchadnezzar's territory under a chief and went away to the Ghor hills. Their descendants settled down in that place, multiplied at a fast rate, and people began to designate them as Beni Israel, Beni Asif and Beni Afghan.

On page 64, the same author says that reliable records like *Taarikh-i-Afghani, Taarikh-i-Ghori,* etc., contain the assertion that the Afghans are mostly Beni Israel and some of them are of Coptic origin. Moreover, Abul Fazl also states that some Afghans regard themselves as of Egyptian origin, the reason given by them being that when the Beni Israel returned to Egypt from Jerusalem, this tribe, namely, the Afghans migrated to India. On page 64 Farid-ud-Din Ahmad writes about the title 'Afghan' that some writers are on record having said that after exile (from Syria) they used always to 'bewail and cry' in remembrance of their home. That is why they were named Afghans.[71] Sir John Malcolm is also of the same opinion; vide *History of Persia,* Vol. I, page 101.

On page 63, is given Mahabat Khan's statement that: 'As they are the followers and relations of Solomon, they are, therefore, styled Sulaimanis by the Arabs'.

On page 65, it is written that investigations of almost all oriental historians show that the Afghan people's own view is that they are of Jewish origin. Some of the present day historians have adopted the same view and regard it as true or very nearly true....

The translator Bernard Dorn's contention that the adoption of Jewish names by Afghans is due to their having accepted Islam is not sustained by evidence. In north western and western Punjab, there are tribes of Hindu origin who have become Muslims but whose names are not after the names of the Jewish people, which clearly shows

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[71] Meaning that the title 'Afghan' is a combination of two Persian words 'Aah' (lament) and 'Faghan' (cry of pain). (Translator)

that by becoming Muslim people do not necessarily adopt Jewish names.

That in features the Afghans have a surprising resemblance to the Jews, is a fact which is admitted even by such scholars as do not at all subscribe to the Afghan claim that they are of Jewish origin. This is the only proof strong enough to establish that the Afghan are of Jewish origin. Sir John Malcolm's remarks in this connection are as follows: "Although the Afghans' right to this proud (Jewish) descent is very doubtful, it is evident from their personal appearance and many of their customs that they (the Afghans) are a distinct race from the Persians, Tartars and Indians and this alone seems to give some credibility to the Afghan claim which is otherwise contradicted by many strong facts, and of which no direct proof has been produced. If similarity of features between one people and another can point to anything, the Kashmiris with their Jewish features would certainly be found to be of Jewish origin. This has been mentioned not only by Bernier but also by Forster, and possibly by other scholars." Although Forster does not accept Bernier's opinion, he concedes that when he was among the Kashmiris he thought he was living amidst a Jewish people.[72]

Under the word 'Cashmere', on page 250 of A. K. Johnston's Dictionary of Geography, there is this statement:

> ***The natives are of a tall, robust frame of body, with manly features, the women full-formed and handsome, with an acquiline nose and features, resembling the Jewish.***[73]

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[72] See Appendix, extract 21. (Translator)
[73] See Appendix, extract 22. (Translator)

The *Civil & Military Gazette* of 23 November 1898 on page 4 under the heading *Sawati and Afridi,* reproduces a very valuable and interesting paper presented to the Anthropological section of the British Association at one of its recent meetings, which will be read at its winter session before the Committee on Anthropological Research. The Gazette says:

> ***The original Pathan or Paktan inhabitants of these western gates of India are recognised in very early history, many of the tribes being mentioned by Herodotus and the historians of Alexander. In mediaeval times the rough uncultivated wilderness of mountains they held was called Roh, and its inhabitants Rohillas, and there can be little doubt that most of these early Rohilla or Pathan tribes were in their places long before the overlying Afghan tribes were thought of. All Afghans whatsoever now counted as Pathans, because they all speak the Pathan language, Pushto, they acknowledge no direct kinship, claiming themselves to be Beni Israel, the descendants of those tribes who were carried captive to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar. All of them have, however, adopted the Pushto tongue, and all recognise the same Pathan code of common civil observances called Paktanwali, which is, in many of its provisions, curiously suggestive both of the old Mosaic dispensation and of ancient observances of the Rajput races.***
>
> ***Thus the Pathans, with whom we have lately been so largely concerned, may be divided into two great communities, i.e. tribes and clans such as Waziris, Afridis, Orakzais, etc. who are of Indian origin, and those who are Afghans, who claim to be Semitic and who represent the dominant race throughout our frontier; and it seems at least to be possible that the Paktanwali, which is an unwritten code and which is acknowledged by them all alike, may be of very mixed origin indeed. We may find in it Mosaic ordinances grafted on to Rajput traditions and modified by Moslem custom. The Afghans, who call themselves Duranis and who have done so***

ever since the foundation of the Durani Empire about a century and a half ago, say that they trace their descent from the Israelitish tribes through an ancestor named Kish (Qais), to whom the prophet Mohomet gave the name Pathan (which is Syriac for a rudder), because he was to steer his people into the currents of Islam.... It is difficult to account for the universal prevalence of Israelitish names amongst Afghans without admitting some early connection with the Israelitish nation. Still more difficult is it to account for certain observances, such for instance as the keeping of the Feast of the Passover (which, by the Yusufzai branch of the Afghan race, is at most curiously well imitated) or for the persistence with which the least educated Afghans maintain this tradition, without some original basis of truth for it. Bellew thinks that this Israelitish connection may be a real one, but he points out that one at least of the three main branches of the Afghan family traditionally sprung from Kish (Qais), is called by the name Sarabaur, which is but the Pushto form of the ancient name applied to the solar race of Rajputs, colonies of whom are known to have immigrated into Afghanistan after their defeat by the Chandrabans, the lunar race in the great contest, the Mahabharat of early Indian records. Thus the Afghan may possibly be an Israelite absorbed into ancient Rajput tribes, and this has always appeared to me to be the most probable solution of the problem of his origin. Anyhow, the modern Afghan takes his stand, on the grounds of tradition, to be one of the chosen race, a descendant of Abraham....

We have reproduced all these quotations from the writings of well-known authors, and if considered together, they will convince the impartial reader that Afghans and Kashmiris, who are to be found in India, on the frontier and in its neighbourhood, are really the Beni Israel. In the second part of this book, God willing, I shall prove in greater detail that the ultimate object underlying Jesus' long journey to India was that he might discharge the duty of

preaching to all the Israelite tribes, a fact to which he has alluded in the Gospels. It is not surprising, therefore, that he should have come to India and Kashmir. On the contrary, it would indeed be surprising if, without discharging his duties as prophet, he should have ascended to the heavens and taken his seat there. With this, we close this part of the discussion.

Peace be on those who are guided aright.

MIRZA GHULAM AHMAD,
The Promised Messiah,
Qadian, District Gurdaspur.

Appendix

Extracts from the Original Books which have been Quoted by the Author in 'Jesus in India'.

1

Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by some Points in the History of **Indian Buddhism**, by T. W. Rhys Davids, (the Hibbert Lectures , 1881) (Williams & Norgate, London 1881)

Page 147. 'All this is of peculiar interest from the comparative point of view. It is an expression from the Buddhist standpoint, which excludes the theory of a Supreme Deity, of an idea very similar to that which is expressed in Christian writings when Christ is represented as the manifestation of God to men, the Logos, the Word of God made flesh, the Bread of Life. And it is not a mere chance that heterodox followers of the two religions have afterwards used the Buddha and the Logos conceptions as bases of their emanation theories. It is only a fresh instance of the way in which similar ideas in similarly constituted minds come to be modified in very similar ways. The Cakka-vatti Buddha was to the early Buddhists what the Messiah Logos was to the early Christians. In both cases the two ideas overlap one another, run into one another, supplement one another. In both cases, the two combined cover as nearly the same ground as the different foundations of the two teachings will permit. And it is the Cakka-vatti Buddha circle of ideas in the one case, just as the Messiah Logos in the other, that has had the principal influence in determining the opinions of the early disciples as to the person of their Master. The method followed in the early Buddhist and early Christian biographies of their respective Masters was the same, and led to similar results; though the details are in no particular quite identical in the two cases.'

2

Buddhism, in its Connexion with Brāhmanism and Hindūism, and in its Contrast with Christianity, by Sir Monier Monier-Williams, K.C.I.E., Second Edition, (John Murray, London 1890)

Pages 134-135. 'He said of himself (Mahā-vagga 1.6,8),— 'I am the all- subduer (sabbābhibhū); the all- wise; I have no stains; through myself I possess knowledge; I have no rival (patipuggalo); I am the chief Arhat— the highest teacher; I alone am the absolutely wise (Sambuddha); I am the Conqueror (Jina); all the fires of desire are quenched (sītibhūto) in me; I have Nirvāna (nibbuto).'

Page 135 *(foot- note)*. 'In fact Gautama remained a Bodhi-sattva until he was thirty-four or thirty-five, when he attained perfect enlightenment and Buddhahood.'

Page 126. '1. Kill not any living thing. 2. Steal not. 3. Commit not adultery. 4. Lie not. 5. Drink not strong drink....
6. Eat no food except at stated times. 7. Use no wreaths, ornaments, or perfumes. 8. Use no high or broad bed, but only a mat on the ground. 9. Abstain from dancing, singing, music, and worldly spectacles. 10. Own no gold, or silver of any kind, and accept none. (Mahā-vagga 1.56). [This Buddhist Dasa-sīla may be contrasted with the Mosaic Decalogue.]'

Pages 45-47. 'The Buddha's early disciples were not poor men; for the sixth to be admitted to the Sangha was a high-born youth named Yasa.....
In sending forth these sixty monks to proclaim his own gospel of deliverance, he addressed them thus:-
'I am delivered from all fetters (p.127), human and divine. You too, O monks, are freed from the same fetters. Go forth and wander everywhere, out of compassion for the world and for the welfare of gods and men. Go forth, one by one, in different directions. Preach the doctrine (Dharmam), salutary (kalyāna) in its beginning, middle, and end, in its spirit (artha) and in its letter (vyañjana). Proclaim a life of perfect restraint, chastity, and celibacy (brahmaćariyam). I will go also to preach this doctrine' (Mahā-vagga I. II. I).
When his monk-missionaries had departed, Gautama himself

followed, though not till Māra (p. 41) had again tempted him. Quitting Benares he journeyed back to Uruvelā, near Gayā. There he first converted thirty rich young men and then one thousand orthodox Brāhmans, led by Kāsyapa and his two brothers, who maintained a sacred fire ('Brāhmanism,' p. 364). The fire-chamber was haunted by a fiery snake-demon; so Buddha asked to accupy the room for a night, fought the serpent and confined him in his own alms-bowl. Next he worked other miracles (said to have been 3500 in number)....

To them on a hill Gayāsīsa (Brahma-yoni), near Gayā, he preached his 'burning' fire-sermon (Mahā-vº I. 21): 'Everything, O monks, is burning (ādittam=ādīptam). The eye is burning; visible things are burning. The sensation produced by contact with visible things is burning—burning with fire of lust (desire), enmity and delusion (rāgagginā dosagginā mohagginā), with birth, decay (jarayā), death, grief, lamentation, pain, dejection (domanassehi), and despair (upāyāsehi). The ear is burning; sounds are burning; the nośe is burning, odours are burning; the tongue is burning, tastes are burning; the body is burning, objects of sense are burning. The mind is burning; thoughts are burning. All are burning with the fire of passions and lusts. Observing this, O monks, a wise and noble disciple becomes weary of (or disgusted with) the eye, weary of visible things, weary of the ear, weary of sounds, weary of odours, weary of tastes, weary of the body, weary of the mind. Becoming weary, he frees himself from passions and lusts. When free, he realizes that his object is accomplished, that he has lived a life of restraint and chastity (brahmaćariyam), that re-birth is ended.'

It is said that this fire-sermon—which is a key to the meaning of Nirvāna—was suggested by the sight of a conflagration. It was Gautama's custom to impress ideas on his hearers by pointing to visible objects. He compares all life to a flame; and the gist of the discourse is the duty of extinguishing the fire of lusts, and with it the fire of all existence, and importance of monkhood and celibacy for the attainment of this end.

Contrast in Christ's Sermon on the Mount the words addressed to the multitude (not to monks), 'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.'

The Buddha and his followers next proceeded to Rājagriha.'

3

Buddhism: being a Sketch of the Life and Teachings of Gautama, the Buddha, by T. W. Rhys Davids, M.A. Ph.D. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London 1882)

Page 183. 'His mother was the best and the purest of the daughters of men.'

In the footnote of page 183, Davids quotes St. Jerome:

'St. Jerome says (contra Jovian. bk. I): 'It is handed down as a tradition among the Gymnosophists of India, that Buddha, the founder of their system, was brought forth by a virgin from her side.'

4

The **Life of the Buddha** and the Early History of his Order, derived from Tibetan Works in the Bkah-Hgyur and Bstan-Hgyur, translated by W. Woodville Rockhill (Trübner & Co. London 1884)

Page 32. 'The rumour had reached Kapilavastu that the prince had died under the excess of his penances, and all the court was plunged in despair, and his wives fell fainting to the ground; but a little after came the news that he had attained enlightenment, and great was the rejoicing everywhere.'

Page 141. 'As soon as the Blessed One expired the mighty earth was shaken, thunderbolts did fall, and the gods in the sky did shriek with (or like) sound of drum (f.635[a]). At that time the venerable Mahâkâçyapa was stopping in the Kalantakanivasa Bamboo grove at Râjagriha; and when the earth quaked he sought what might be the reason, and he saw that the Blessed One had utterly passed away...'

5

Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order by Dr.

Hermann Oldenberg, Translated from the German by William Hoey, M.A., D.Lit. (Williams & Norgate, London 1882)

Page 142 *(foot-note):* 'On the occasion of a prophecy of Buddha's regarding Metteyya, the next Buddha, who will in the far future appear upon the earth, it is said: "He will be the leader of a band of disciples, numbering hundreds of thousands, as I am now the leader of bands of disciples, numbering hundreds."—*Cakkavattisuttanta.*'

Page 419. 'Regarding the wife and child of Buddha the chief passage is "Mahâvagga," i, 54; Râhula is frequently mentioned in the Sutta texts as Buddha's son, without any prominent *rôle* being ascribed to him among the circles of disciples by the ancient tradition.'

Page 103. 'He *(Buddha)* says: "Râhula is born to me, a fetter has been forged for me."

Page 103 *(foot-note).* 'In the name Râhula there seems to be an allusion to Râhu, the sun and moon subduing (darkening) demon.'

6

Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia; their Social and Political Condition, and the Religion of Boodh, as there Existing, by Henry T. Prinsep Esq. Second Edition (Wm. H. Allen & Co. London 1852)

Pages 12-14. 'The earliest travels into Tibet Proper which have been transmitted to us, are those of the Jesuit fathers, Grueber and Dorville, who returned from China by that route in A.D. 1661, just four hundred years after Marco Polo's journey westward. They were the first Christians of Europe who are known to have penetrated into the populous parts of Tibet; for Marco Polo's journey was, as we have stated, to the north-west, by the sources of the Oxus. Father Grueber was much struck with the extraordinary similitude he found, as well in the doctrine, as in the rituals, of the Boodhists of

Lassa to those of his own Romish faith. He noticed first, that the dress of Lamas corresponded with that handed down to us in ancient paintings, as the dress of the Apostles. 2nd. That the discipline of the monasteries, and of the different orders of Lamas or priests, bore the same resemblance to that of the Romish church. 3rd. That the notion of an incarnation was common to both, so also the belief in paradise and purgatory. 4th. He remarked that they made suffrages, alms, prayers, and sacrifices for the dead, like the Roman Catholics. 5th. That they had convents, filled with monks and friars, to the number of 30,000, near Lassa, who all made the three vows of poverty, obedience, and chastity, like Roman monks, besides other vows. And 6th, that they had confessors, licensed by the superior Lamas, or bishops; and so empowered to receive confessions, and to impose penances, and give absolution. Besides all this, there was found the practice of using holy water, of singing service in alternation, of praying for the dead, and a perfect similarity in the costumes of the great and superior Lamas to those of the different orders of the Romish hierarchy. These early missionaries, further, were led to conclude, from what they saw and heard, that the ancient books of the Lamas contained traces of the Christian religion, which must, they thought, have been preached in Tibet in the time of the Apostles.'

Then concerning the advent of a Saviour, the author H. T. Prinsep writes in the same book (Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia) on page 171:

'The general expectation of the birth of a great prophet, Redeemer, or Saviour, which is alluded to even by Tacitus, as prevailing at the period when the founder of the Christian religion appeared, was, there can be no doubt, of Boodhistic origin, and not at all confined to Jews, or based only on the prophecies of their Scripture.'

As a foot-note on page 171 the author further wrote:

'The advent of another Boodh a thousand years after Gotama, or Sakhya Muni, is distinctly prophesied in the Pitakattayan and Attha-

katha. Gotama declares himself to be the twenty-fifth Boodh, and says, "Bagawa Metteyo is yet to come." The name Metteyo bears an extraordinary resemblance to Messiah.'

7

A Record of **The Buddhist Religion** as Practised in India and the Malay Archipelago (A.D. 671-695) by I-Tsing, Translated by J. Takakusu, B.A., Ph.D. (Oxford, Clarendon Press 1896)

pages 223-224: 'It is indeed curious to find the name of MESSIAH in a Buddhist work, though the name comes in quite accidentally. The book is called 'The New Catalogue of the Buddhist Books compiled in the Chêng Yüan Period' (A.D. 785-804), in the new Japanese edition of the Chinese Buddhist Books (Bodleian Library, Jap. 65 DD, 結六, P. 73; this book is not in Nanjio's Catalogue)....

Moreover, the Sanghârâma of the Sâkya and the monastery of Tâ-ch'in (Syria) differ much in their customs, and their religious practices are entirely opposed to each other. King-ching (Adam) ought to hand down the teaching of MESSIAH (Mi-shi-ho), and the Sâkyaputriya-Sramaṇas should propagate the Sûtras of the Buddha.'

8

The **Nineteenth Century**: a Monthly Review, edited by James Knowles, Vol. XXXVI, July-December 1894 (Sampson Low, Marston & Co. London 1894)

Page 517. 'But M. Notovitch, though he did not bring the manuscripts home, at all events saw them, and not pretending to a knowledge of Tibetan, had the Tibetan text translated by an interpreter, and has published seventy pages of it in French in his *Vie inconnue de Jésus-Christ*. He was evidently prepared for the discovery of a Life of Christ among the Buddhists. Similarities between Christianity and Buddhism have frequently been pointed out of late,

and the idea that Christ was influenced by Buddhist doctrines has more than once been put forward by popular writers. The difficulty has hitherto been to discover any real historical channel through which Buddhism could have reached Palestine at the time of Christ. M. Notovitch thinks that the manuscript which he found at Himis explains the matter in the simplest way. There is no doubt, as he says, a gap in the life of Christ, say from his fifteenth to his twenty-ninth year. During that very time the new Life found in Tibet asserts that Christ was in India, that he studied Sanskrit and Pâli, that he read the Vedas and the Buddhist Canon, and then returned through Persia to Palestine to preach the Gospel. If we understand M. Notovitch rightly, this Life of Christ was taken down from the mouths of some Jewish merchants who came to India immediately after the Crucifixion (P. 237). It was written down in Pâli, the sacred language of Southern Buddhism; the scrolls were afterwards brought from India to Nepaul and Makhada (*quære* Magadha) about 200 A.D. (P. 236), and from Nepaul to Tibet, and are at present carefully preserved at Lassa. Tibetan translations of the Pâli text are found, he says, in various Buddhist monasteries, and, among the rest, at Himis. It is these Tibetan manuscripts which were translated at Himis for M. Notovitch while he was laid up in the monastery with a broken leg, and it is from these manuscripts that he has taken his new Life of Jesus Christ and published it in French, with an account of his travels. This volume, which has already passed through several editions in France, is soon to be translated into English.'

9

The **Mystery of the Ages** contained in the Secret Doctrine of all Religions. By Marie, Countess of Caithness, Duchesse De Pomár (C. L. H. Wallace, Philanthropic Reform Publisher, Oxford Mansion, W. London 1887)

On Page 145 *the author says about 'Buddhism'*: ..... It is the Christianity of the East, and, as such, even in better

conservation than is Christianity, the Buddhism of the West.'

10

Travels in the **Mogul Empire** A.D. 1656-1668 by François Bernier, Translated, on the basis of Irving Brock's version and annotated by Archibald Constable 1891, Second Edition, revised by Vincent A. Smith, M.A. (Oxford University Press 1916)

Page 430. 'There are, however, many signs of *Judaism* to be found in this country. On entering the Kingdom after crossing the *Pire-penjale* mountains, the inhabitants in the frontier villages struck me as resembling *Jews*. Their countenance and manner, and that indescribable peculiarity which enables a traveller to distinguish the inhabitants of different nations, all seemed to belong to that ancient people. You are not to ascribe what I say to mere fancy, the *Jewish* appearance of these villagers having been remarked by our *Jesuit Father*, and by several other *Europeans*, long before I visited *Kachemire*.'

11

A **Journey from Bengal to England**, through the Northern Part of India, Kashmire, Afghanistan, and Perisa, and into Russia by the Caspian-Sea, by George Forster, vol. II (R. Faulder and Son, London 1808)

Page 23. 'On first seeing these people in their own country, I imagined, from their garb, the cast of countenance, which is long, and of a grave aspect, and the form of their beards, that I had come amongst a nation of Jews.'

12

The **Races of Afghanistan**, being a Brief Account of the Principal Nations Inhabiting that Country, by Surgeon-

Major H. W. Bellew, C.S.I. (Thacker, Spink & Co. Calcutta, (1880) MDCCCLXXX)

Page15. 'The traditions of this people refer them to Syria as the country of their residence at the time they were carried away into captivity by Bukhtunasar (Nebuchadnezzar), and planted as colonists in different parts of Persia and Media. From these positions they, at some subsequent period, emigrated eastward into the mountainous country of Ghor, where they were called by the neighbouring peoples "Bani Afghan" and "Bani Israíl," or children of Afghan, and children of Israel. In corroboration of this we have the testimony of the prophet Esdras to the effect that the ten tribes of Israel, who were carried into captivity, subsequently escaped and found refuge in the country of Arsareth, which is supposed to be identical with the Hazarah country of the present day, and of which Ghor forms a part. It is also stated in the Tabacati Nasiri—a historical work which contains, among other information, a detailed account of the conquest of this country by Changhiz Khan— that in the time of the native Shansabi dynasty there was a people called Bani Israíl living in that country, and that some of them were extensively engaged in trade with the countries around.

This people was settled in the Ghor country, to the east of Herat, at the time that Muhammad announced his mission as the Prophet of God— about 622 A.D. And it was there that Khalid-bin-Walíd, a chief of the Curesh tribe of Arabs, came to them with the tidings of the new faith, and an invitation to join the Prophet's standard.'

Page 16. '..... the mission of Khalid was not without success, for he returned to the Prophet, accompanied by a deputation of six or seven representative men of the Afghan people and their followers amounting in all to seventy-six persons. The chief or leader of this party was named Kais or Kish.

The traditions of the people go on to the effect that this Kais and his companions fought so well and successfully in the cause of the Prophet, that Muhammad, on dismissing them to their homes,

presented them with handsome gifts, complimented them on their bravery, and giving them his blessing foretold a glorious career for their nation, and promised that the title of Malik (or king) should distinguish their chiefs for ever.... At the same time the Prophet, as a mark of special favour and distinction, was pleased to change the Hebrew name of Kais to the Arab one of Abdur Rashíd— "the servant of the true guide"— and, exhorting him to strive in the conversion of his people, conferred on him the title of "Pahtán," —a term which the Afghan book-makers explain to be a Syrian word signifying the rudder of a ship, as the new proselyte was henceforth to be the guide of his people in the way they should go.'

Page 17. 'At what period the Afghans of Ghor moved forward and settled in the Kandahar country, which is now their home, is not known. It appears, however, from the writings of the early Muhammadan historians, that in the first century of their era....'

Page 19. 'Kais, they say, married a daughter of that Khalid-bin-Walíd who brought his people the first tidings of the Prophet and his doctrine, and by her he had three sons, whom he named respectively, Saraban, Batan, and Ghurghusht....

The Afghans Proper—the Bani Israíl, as they call themselves in special distinction to all other divisions of the nation—class themselves as the descendants of Saraban through his two sons, Sharjyún and Khrishyún.'

Page 24. 'By Muhammadans of Asia Minor and the Western countries the Afghan is usually called Sulemáni.'

13

The **Cyclopædia of India** and of Eastern and Southern Asia, by Surgeon General Edward Balfour, vol. I, Third

Edition (Bernard Quaritch, London 1885)

page 31 *(Under the heading 'Afghanistan')*: 'Pukhtun is the national appellation of the Afghans proper; but Afghans and Pathans also designate themselves Ban-i-Israel, and some claim direct descent from Saul, king of Israel. Pukhtun is the individual, and Pukhtana the collective name of the Afghans. This word is described as of Hebrew (Ibrani) origin, though some of them say it has a Syrian (Suriani) source, and signifies delivered, set free. The term Afghan is also said to have the same signification. One tradition is that the mother of Afghan or Afghana, on his being born exclaimed, 'Afghana', 'I am free,' and gave him this name; another tradition is that in the pangs of labour she exclaimed: 'Afghan, Afghan,' or 'Fighan, Fighan,' words which in the Persian mean woe! grief! alas! Afghan is claimed as the designation only of the descendants of Kais.

The term Pathan is said to be from Pihtan, a titular appellation alleged to have been bestowed by Mahomed on an Afghan called Kais.

Their origin is involved in obscurity. But several writers consider them to be descendants of one of the ten tribes of Israel; and this is an opinion of some Afghans themselves. A few authors consider that this nation is not of Jewish origin, but that those who introduced the Mahomedan religion amongst them were converted Jews.'

Page 34. 'Among the Yusufzai, no man sees his wife till the marriage ceremonies are completed; and with all the Bardurani there is great reserve between the time when the parties are betrothed and the marriage. Some of them live with their future father-in-law, and earn their bread by their services, as Jacob did Rachel, without ever seeing the object of their wishes.....

Among the Afghans, as among the Jews, it is thought incumbent on the brother of the deceased to marry his widow, and it is a mortal affront to the brother for any other person to marry her without his consent.'

14

Narrative of a **Mission to Bokhara**, in the years 1843-1845, to ascertain the Fate of Colonel Stoddart and Captain Conolly, by the Rev. Joseph Wolff, D.D. LL.D., Vol. 1, second edition, revised (John W. Parker, London {1845} M.DCCC.XLV.)

Page 7. 'From various conversations with Affghauns in Khorassaun and elsewhere, I learnt that some of them are proud of an origin from the children of Israel, but I doubt the truth of that partial tradition.'

Page 13. 'All the Jews of Tūrkistaun assert that the Tūrkomauns are the descendants of Togarmah, one of the sons of Gomer, mentioned in Genesis x. 3.'

Pages 14-16. 'The Jews in Bokhara are 10,000 in number. The chief rabbi assured me that Bokhara is the Habor, and Balkh the Halah, of the 2nd Kings, xvii.6; but that in the reign of Genghis Khan they lost all their written accounts. At Balkh the Mussulman mullahs assured me that it was built by a son of Adam, that its first name had been Hanakh, and afterwards Halah, though later writers called it Balakh, or Balkh. The Jews, both of Balkh and Samarcand, assert that Tūrkistaun is the land of Nod, and Balkh where Nod "once stood."..... The tradition is an old one at Bokhara, that some of the Ten Tribes are in China. I tried the Jews here on various points of Scriptural interpretation, particularly that important one in Isaiah vii.14 -- עלמה Virgin. They translated it as we Christians do, and they are in total ignorance of the important controversy between Jews and Christians on that point.

I obtained a passport from the King after this most interesting sojourn, and then crossed the Oxus, and arrived after a few days at Balkh; and from that city, where I also communed with the dispersed of Israel, I proceeded to Muzaur..... Some Affghauns claim a descent from Israel. According to them, Affghaun was the nephew of Asaph, the son of Berachia, who built the Temple of Solomon. The

descendants of this Affghaun, being Jews, were carried into Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, from whence they were removed to the mountain of Ghoree, in Affghanistaun, but in the time of Muhammed turned Muhammedans. They exhibit a book, *Majmooa Alansab*, or Collection of Genealogies, written in Persian.'

Page 17. 'Hence I passed to Peshawr. Here I had also the singular book read to me of the origin of the Affghauns, the Poshtoo Book of Khan Jehaun Loote. The account in this book agrees with that given in the MSS., *Teemur Nameh* and *Ketaub Ansabee Muhakkek Toose*. I thought the general physiognomy not Jewish, but I was wonderfully struck with the resemblance that the Youssuf Szeye and the Khaibaree, two of their tribes, bear to the Jews. The Kaffre Seeah Poosh, if Affghauns, vary widely from the rest of their nation. Many travellers have thought them the descendants from Alexander's army, but they do not say so.'

Page 18. 'I always thought that the Kaffre Seeah Poosh were descendants of Israel; and some of the learned Jews of Samarcand are of my opinion.'

Pages 19-20. 'Captain Riley, I was surprised to find, looked on the Affghauns as of Jewish descent.'

Page 58. 'I spent six days with the children of Rechab (Beni Arhab)..... With them were children of Israel of the tribe of Dan, who reside near Terim in Hatramawt, who expect, in common with the children of Rechab, the speedy arrival of the Messiah in the clouds of heaven.'

Page 131. 'It is very remarkable that the Prophet Ezekiel, in the twenty-seventh chapter, fourteenth verse, gives an exact description of the trade carried on by the Tūrkomauns with the inhabitants of Bokhara, Khiva, and Khokand. The Prophet says: "They of the house of Togarmah (i.e. the Tūrkomauns) traded in thy fairs with horses and horsemen, and mules." The Tūrkomauns to this day, like the Swiss Guards, are mercenaries, and let themselves out for a few

tengas a day. It is also remarkable, that I frequently heard the Tūrkomauns call themselves Toghramah, and the Jews call them Togarmah.

Viewing the hosts of camels coming with merchandise from Cashmeer, Cabūl, Khokand, Khetay, and Orenbourg, the passage of Isaiah 1x.6, comes forcibly on the mind, where the Prophet says: "The multitude of camels shall cover thee, the dromedaries of Midian and Ephah; all they from Sheba shall come: they shall bring gold and incense." Mentioning gold, I must not forget, that near Samarcand there are gold mines and turquoises.'

Pages 236-237. 'A few words on the Chaldeans in the mountains of Kurdistaun. These Chaldeans, as the late lamented Dr. Grant well observed, are of Jewish origin, though I cannot go so far as to affirm that they are of the Ten Tribes, since they do not know their own genealogy. They are now mostly Christians..... They resemble mostly the Protestants of Germany and England, for they have neither images nor monasteries, and their priests are married. The episcopal dignity, however, is hereditary, as well as that of the Patriarch, and at the time the mother of the patriarch becomes pregnant, she abstains from drinking wine and eating meat; and in case that a son is born, he is the patriarch, and if a daughter, she is obliged to observe eternal virginity.'

15

The **Lost Tribes** and the Saxons of the East and of the West, with new Views of Buddhism, and Translations of Rock-Records in India, by George Moore, M.D. (Longman, Green, Longman, and Roberts, London {1861}

MDCCCLXI)

Page 143. 'We are attracted at once to a country of vast importance in the present aspect of the East, and the more interesting to us, as we there find a people who profess to be the Beni-Israel, or descendants of the Ten Tribes, namely, Afghanistan and the adjacent countries.'

Pages 145-146. 'The prominent reasons for thinking that certain classes of the people of Bokhara and Afghanistan are of Israelitish origin are these:— 1st. Their personal resemblance to the Hebrew family. Thus Dr. Wolff, the Jewish missionary, says: "I was wonderfully struck with the resemblance of the Youssoufszye [tribe of Joseph], and the Khybere, two of their tribes, to the Jews." Moorcroft also says of the Khyberes, "They are tall, and of singularly Jewish cast of features." 2nd. They have been named by themselves Beni-Israel, children of Israel, from time immemorial. 3rd. The names of their tribes are Israelitish, especially that of Joseph, which includes Ephraim and Manasseh. In the Book of Revelation the tribe of Joseph stands for Ephraim. (Rev. vii. 6,8.) In Numbers xxxvi.5, Moses speaks of Manasseh as "the tribe of the sons of Joseph;" so that it is clear that both Manasseh and Ephraim were known by the name of the tribe of Joseph. 4th. The Hebrew names of places and persons in Afghanistan are of far greater frequency than can be accounted for through Mahometan association; and, indeed, these names existed before the Afghans became Mahometans. 5th. All accounts agree that they inhabited the mountains of Ghore from a very remote antiquity. It is certain that the princes of Ghore belonged to the Afghan tribe of Sooree, and that their dynasty was allowed to be of very great antiquity even in the eleventh century. "They seem early to have possessed the mountains of Solimaun or Solomon, comprehending all the southern mountains of Afghanistan." (Elphinstone.) 6th. Afghan is the name given to their nation by others, the name they give their nation is Pushtoon, and Drs. Carey and Marshman assert that the Pushtoon language has more Hebrew roots than any other.'

Pages 147-148. 'The antiquity of the name of the country Cabul, or Cabool, is then established; and it is also shown that some peculiar people known as "The Tribes," and "The Noble Tribes," dwelt there at a very remote period. There is, therefore, good evidence that the present inhabitants of Cabul may be justified in asserting that from the earliest period of history they and their ancestors have occupied Cabul, and that from time immemorial they have been known as "The Tribes." That is to say, Israelitish tribes, such as they now assume themselves to be. .... According to Sir W. Jones, the best Persian authorities agree with them in their account of their origin; and resident and competent authorities, such as Sir John Malcolm, and the missionary Mr. Chamberlain, after full investigation, assure us that many of the Afghans are undoubtedly of the seed of Abraham.'

16

The Works of **Flavius Josephus**; comprising the Antiquities of the Jews; a **History of the Jewish Wars**, and Life of Flavius Josephus; Written by Himself. Translated by William Whiston, A.M., Professor of mathematics in the University of Cambridge (Willoughby & Co. London 1840)

Page 223. '...the ten tribes are beyond Euphrates till now, and are an immense multitude, and not to be estimated by numbers.'

17

A personal narrative of a visit to **Ghuzni, Kabul, and Afghanistan**, and of a Residence at the Court of Dost Mohamed: with Notices of Runjit Sing, Khiva, and the Russian Expedition, by G. T. Vigne Esq. F.G.S. (Whittaker & Co. London 1840)

Pages 166-167. 'Moollah Khoda Dad, a person learned in the

history of his countrymen, read to me, from the Mujma-ul-Unsab (collection of genealogies), the following short account of their origin. They say, that the eldest of Jacob's sons was Judah, whose eldest son was Osruk, who was the father of Oknur, the father of Moalib, the father of Farlai, the father of Kys, the father of Talut, the father of Ermiah, the father of Afghana, whence the name of Afghans. He was contemporary with Nebuchadnezzar, called himself Bin-i-Israel, and had forty sons, whose names there is no occasion to insert. His thirty-fourth descendant, in a direct line, after a period of two thousand years, was Kys. From Kys, who lived in the time of the prophet Mahomed, there have been sixty-six generations. Sulum, the eldest son of Afghana, who lived at Sham [Damascus], left that place, and came to Ghura Mishkon, a country near Herat; and his descendants gradually extended themselves over the country now called Afghanistan.'

18

A **Cyclopædia of Geography** Descriptive and Physical, forming a New General Gazetteer of the World and Dictionary of Pronunciation, by James Bryce, M.A., F.G.S. (Richard Griffin and Co. London and Glasgow 1856)

page 11. 'The name Afghan is not used by the people themselves; they call themselves Pooshtoon, and in the plural Pooshtaûneh, from which, perhaps, comes the name Putan, or Patan, given to them in India. They trace their origin to Saul, King of Israel, calling themselves, Ben-i-Israel. According to Sir A. Burnes, their tradition is, that they were transplanted by the King of Babylon from the Holy Land to Ghoré, lying to the N.W. of Cabool, and lived as Jews till A.D. 682, when they were converted to Mahometanism by an Arab chief, Khaled-ibn-Abdalla, who had married a daughter of an Afghan chief. No historical evidence has ever been adduced in support of this origin, and it is perhaps a mere invention, founded

upon the facts mentioned in 2 Kings xviii.11. However this may be, all travellers agree that the people differ strikingly from the neighbouring nations; and have, among themselves, one common origin. They are said, by some, to resemble Jews very much in form and feature; and they are divided into several tribes, inhabiting separate territories, and remaining almost unmixed.'

19

History of Afghanistan, from the Earliest Period to the Outbreak of the War of 1878, by Colonel G. B. Malleson, C.S.I. (W.H. Allen & Co. London, 1878)

Page 39. 'I turn now to the people of Afghánistán, to the tribes who occupy the country, and who command the passes. The subject has been treated at great length by Mountstuart Elphinstone, by Ferrier—who quotes largely from Abdúllah Khán, of Herát,—by Bellew, and by many others.

Following Abdúllah Khán and other Afghán writers, Ferrier is disposed to believe that the Afgháns represent the lost ten tribes, and to claim for them descent from Saul, King of Israel. Amongst other writers concurring in this view may be mentioned the honoured name of Sir William Jones. On the other hand, Professor Dorn, of Kharkov, who examined the subject at length, rejects this theory. Mountstuart Elphinstone classes it in the same category as the theory of the descent of the Romans from the Trojans. The objections to Abdúllah Khán's view have been recently expressed, fittingly and forcibly, by Professor Dowson, in a letter to the *Times*. "If," writes that gentleman, "it were worthy of consideration, it is still inconsistent with the notion that the Afgháns are descendants of the lost ten tribes. Saul was of the tribe of Benjamin, and that tribe was not one of the lost ten. There remains the question of feature. This, no doubt, has its weight, but cannot prevail against the more important question of language." Professor Dowson then proceeds to show that the Afghán language has no trace of Hebrew in it, and concludes by

pronouncing the supposition that in the course of time the whole Afghán race could have changed their language as "too incredible."

20

History of the Afghans by J. P. Ferrier, translated from the original unpublished manuscript by Captain William Jesse (John Murray, London, 1858)

Page 1. '... the majority of Eastern writers consider them to be the descendants of one of the ten tribes of Israel— and this is the opinion of the Afghans themselves.'

Page 4. '... the Afghans, however, think that they have evidence of their Jewish origin in the following tradition. When Nadir Shah, marching to the conquest of India, arrived at Peshawur, the chiefs of the tribe of Yoosoofzyes presented him with a Bible written in Hebrew, and several articles that had been used in their ancient worship which they had preserved; these articles were at once recognised by the Jews who followed the camp.'

Page 6. 'Being incompetent to decide which is right, we shall adopt the opinion of Abdullah Khan of Herat as the one most deserving of credit, and we will precede it by giving his view of the manner in which the Afghans were brought to Afghanistan. The following is a translation of his manuscript:

"..... Malek Thalut (Saul) king of the Jews had two sons, Afghan and Djalut— the first was the father of the Afghan nation and gave his name to it. After the reigns of David and Solomon, who succeeded Saul, anarchy divided the Jewish tribes, and this continued to the period at which Bouktun Nasr took Jerusalem, massacred 70,000 Jews, and after destroying that city led the surviving inhabitants captives to Babylon. Subsequently to this disaster the Afghan tribe, struck with terror, fled from Judea and settled in Arabia: here they remained some considerable time, but as pasturage and water were scarce, and both man and beast suffered

extreme privation, some of the tribe determined to emigrate to Hindostan. The branch of the Abdalees continued to reside in Arabia, and during the caliphat of Aboo Bekr their chiefs allied themselves to a powerful sheikh, by name Khaled ibn Velid, of the tribe of Korech. ..... at the period when the Arabs subjugated Persia the Abdalees left Arabia and settled in this new conquest, establishing themselves in the provinces of Fars and Kerman, and here they remained until Genghis Khan invaded those districts. The tyrannical proceedings of this conqueror weighed with such terrible effect on the population, that the Abdalees quitted Persia and, passing by the Mekrane, Scinde, and Mooltan, arrived in India; but the results of this new migration were not more fortunate, for they were scarcely settled here when their neighbours made war upon, and forced them to leave the plains and inhabit the rugged mountains of Suleiman, considered as the cradle of the tribe, and called by them Kooh-Khasseh. The whole Afghan nation was brought together by the arrival of the Abdalees in the Suleiman mountains, and then consisted of twenty-four tribes, of which, as it has been already observed, Afghan, the son of Saul, was the father: this prince had three sons, named Tsera-Bend, Argoutch, and Kerlen, and each of them was the father of eight sons, who gave their names to the twenty-four tribes.

"The following is the manner in which they are classed:—

Sons of Tsera-Bend	**Names of the Tribes**
Abdal	Abdalees
Yoosoof	Yoosoofzyes
Baboor	Baboorees
Wezir	Wezirees
Lohooan	Lohooanees
Beritch	Beritchees
Khooguian	Khooguianees
Chiran	Chiranees
Sons of Argoutch	**Names of the Tribes**

Ghildj	Ghildjzyes
Kauker	Kaukerees
Djumourian	Djumourianees
Storian	Storianees
Pen	Penees
Kass	Kassees
Takan	Takanees
Nassar	Nassarees
Sons of Kerlen	**Names of the Tribes**
Khattak	Khattakees
Soor	Soorees
Afreed	Afreedees
Toor	Toorees
Zaz	Zazees
Bab	Babees
Benguech	Benguechees
Lendeh-poor	Lendeh-poorees'

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History of the Afghans translated from the Persian of Neamet Ullah, by Bernhard Dorn, Ph.D. FOR. M.R.A.S. M.T.C., Part 1 & 2 (J. Murray, London, 1829)

Part 1- page 23. 'Davud treated the two afflicted widows with the utmost kindness; and Heaven blessed them each with an accomplished son, born at the same hour; of whom the one was called Berkhia; the other, Ermia……

Each of them was blessed with an accomplished son. Berkhia called his Asif: Ermia's son was called Afghana.'

Page 24. 'God blessed Asif with eighteen, and Afghana with forty sons; whose posterity, but more particularly that of the latter, continued increasing in such a degree, that no tribe of the Israelites equalled them.'

Page 25. '….. God permitted Bokhtnasser to subjugate the territories of Sham, to rase Jerusalem, and vanquish the Israelites, so as to carry their families into captivity and slavery, and drive all those who had faith in the Tora into exile;…… He reduced the whole

of Sham to his subjection; carrying away the Israelites, whom he settled in the mountainous districts of Ghor, Ghazneen, Kabul, Candahar, Koh Firozeh,....'

Page 37. 'Mestoufi, the author of the Tareekh Kozeida, and the author of the Mujmul Ansab, furnish the following records. When the lustre of Mohammed's charming countenance had arisen, and Khaled had been ennobled by embracing the Mohammedan faith, a large number of Arabs and various people repaired to Medina, and were induced, by the splendor of the Mohammedan light, to embrace Islamism. At this time, Khaled sent a letter to the Afghans who had been settled in the mountainous countries about Ghor ever since the time of the expulsion of the Israelites by Bokhtnasser, and informed them of the appearance of the last of the Prophets. On this letter reaching them, several of their chiefs departed for Medina; the mightiest of whom, and of the Afghan people, was Kais, whose pedigree ascends in a series of thirty-seven degrees to Talut of forty-five to Ibrahim, and of six hundred and three to Adam. The author of the Mujmul Ansab traces it as follows:- Pedigree of Abd Ulrasheed Kais, who is known by the surname Pathan: Kais ben Isa, ben Salool, ben Otba, ben Naeem, ben Morra, ben Gelundur, ben Iskunder, ben Reman, ben Ain, ben Mehlool, ben Salem, ben Selah, ben Farood, ben Ghan, ben Fahlool, ben Karam, ben Amal, ben Hadifa, ben Minhal, ben Kais, ben Ailem, ben Ismuel, ben Harun, ben Kumrood, ben Abi, ben Zaleeb, ben Tullal, ben Levi, ben Amel, ben Tarej, ben Arzund, ben Mundool, ben Saleem, ben Afghana, ben Irmia, ben Sarool, called Melik (King) Talut, ben Kais, ben Otba, ...'

Page 38. 'The Prophet lavished all sorts of blessings upon them; and having ascertained the name of each individual, and remarked that Kais was an Hebrew name, whereas they themselves were Arabs, he gave Kais the name Abd Ulrasheed..... their attachment to the Faith would, in strength, be like the wood upon which they lay the keel when constructing a ship, which wood the seamen call Pathan: on this account he conferred upon Abd Ulrasheed the title of

Pathan also.....

The Prophet at length dismissed Abd Ulrasheed to return to Ghor and the adjacent Kohistan, there to propagate the new faith, and to direct the infidels to it.'

Part 2- page 63 *(Under word 'Suleimani').* 'Muhabbat Khan tells us, that they are called so by the Arabs in consequence of their belonging to the adherents and followers of King Solomon.'

Pages 63-64. *'Bani Afghanah, Bani Afghan;* that is, Children of Asif, Israel, Afghanah, or Afghan. These names are mentioned by Fareed Uddeen Ahmad, in his *Risalah Ansab Afaghinah,* where we find the following passage:—"When, in the course of time, Bokhtnassr the magician, who subdued the Bani Israel and the territories of Syria, and sacked Jerusalem, led the Children of Israel into captivity and slavery, and carried off with him several tribes of this people who were attached to the Law of Moses, and ordered them to adore him for God, and to abandon the creed of their fathers, they did not consent to this: upon which, he put two thousand of the wisest and most skilful of them to death, and ordered the rest to quit Syria and his dominions. Part of them, who had a chief, were led by him out of Bokhtnassr's dominions, and conducted to the Kohistan of Ghor, where their descendants settled. Their number increased daily; and people called them Bani Israel, Bani Asif, and Bani Afghanah."

Page 64. 'Fareed Uddeen Ahmed, in the beginning of his discourse, says on this point: "Concerning the denomination, 'Afghan,' some have written, that they, after their expulsion, ever bearing in mind their wonted abode, uttered bewailings and lamentations (افغـــان *Afghan*), and were on that account called 'Afghan.'" See Sir J. Malcolm's *History of Persia,* Vol. I. p. 101, where the same derivation of this word is mentioned....

Farid Uddeen Ahmed mentions, that in standard works, as in the *Tareekh Afghani, Tareekh Ghori,* and others, it is asserted that the Afghans were, for the greater part, Israelites, and some Copts. See also *Abul Fazl,* P. ii. p. 178: "Some Afghans consider themselves to be

of Egyptian extraction; asserting, that when the Children of Israel returned from Jerusalem to Egypt, this tribe emigrated to Hindoostan."

Page 65. 'The Afghans, according to almost all the Oriental historians, believe themselves to be descended from the Jews; an opinion that was even adopted, or considered probable, by some modern writers..... The use of Jewish names, which the Afghans employ, is undoubtedly attributable to their being Mussulmans..... The only proof that might be adduced in favour of their pretended Jewish extraction, is the striking likeness of the Afghan features to the Jewish; which has been admitted, even by such as do not pay the least attention to their claim to a Jewish origin. Sir John Malcolm's words on this subject are: "Although their right to this proud descent (from the Jews) is very doubtful, it is evident, from their personal appearance, and many of their usages, that they are a distinct race from the Persians, Tartars, and Indians; and this alone seems to give some credibility to a statement which is contradicted by many strong facts, and of which no direct proof has been produced. If an inference could be drawn from the features of a nation resembling those of another, the Cashmirians would certainly, by their Jewish features, prove a Jewish origin, which not only Bernier, but Forster, and perhaps others, have remarked."

Pages 65-66. 'Now, although Forster does not approve of the opinion of Bernier, tracing the descent of the Cashmirians to the exiled Jewish tribes, yet he confesses, that, when among the Cashmirians, he thought himself to be amongst a nation of Jews.'

22

Dictionary of Geography, Descriptive, Physical, Statistical, And Historical, Forming a Complete General Gazetteer of the World, By Alex. Keith Johnston, F.R.S.E., F.R.G.S., F.G.S., Second Edition, thoroughly revised and corrected (Longman, Brown, Green, and

Longmans, London {1855} MDCCLV)

Page 250 *(Under word 'Cashmere')*: 'The natives are of a tall robust frame of body, with manly features—the women full-formed and handsome, with aquiline nose and features, resembling the Jewish.'

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The Unknown Life of Jesus Christ

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OF

JESUS CHRIST

By the Discoverer of the Manuscript

NICOLAS NOTOVITCH

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PREFACE.

AFTER the close of the Turko-Russian War (1877–1878) I undertook a series of extended journeys through the Orient. Having visited all points of interest in the Balkan Peninsula, I crossed the Caucasian Mountains into Central Asia and Persia, and finally, in 1887, made an excursion into India, the most admired country of the dreams of my childhood.

The first object of this journey was to study the customs and habits of the inhabitants of India amid their own surroundings, as well as the grand, mysterious archæology and the colossal, majestic nature of the country. Wandering without any settled course from one locality to another, I at last came to mountainous Afghanistan, whence I reached India through the picturesque passes of Bolan and Guernaï. I then followed the Indus to Rawal-Pindi, traveled through the Punjab — the country of five rivers — visited the golden temple of Amritsir, the tomb of Randjid Singh, king of the Punjab, near Lahore, and proceeded toward Kashmir, the "vale of eternal happiness." There I began my peregrinations as fancy or curiosity

guided or dictated, until I reached the Ladak, where I intended to make a somewhat lengthy stay before returning to Russia through Eastern Turkestan and Karakorum.

In the course of one of my visits to a Buddhist convent, I learned from the chief Lama that there existed very ancient memoirs, treating of the life of Christ and of the nations of the Occident, in the archives of Lassa, and that a few of the larger monasteries possessed copies and translations of these precious chronicles.

There being little probability of my early return to this country, I resolved to delay my departure for Europe, and verify these assertions by seeing some of these copies, even though I were obliged to invade every convent as far as Lassa — a journey far less perilous and difficult to accomplish than we are usually led to believe. Besides this, I was now so well accustomed to the dangers encountered by the traveler in those regions that they no longer possessed any terrors for me.

During my sojourn in Leh, the capital of Ladak, I visited Himis, a large convent in the outskirts of the city, where I was informed by the Lama that the monastic libraries contained a few copies of the manuscript in question.

That I might not arouse the suspicions of the authorities in regard to the object of my visit to the convent, and raise no obstacles to a subsequent journey into Thibet — as a Russian — on my return to Leh I announced my immediate departure for India, and again left the capital of Ladak.

An unfortunate accident, whereby my leg was fractured, furnished me with a totally unexpected pretext to enter the monastery, where I received excellent care and nursing; and I took advantage of my short stay among these monks to obtain the privilege of seeing the manuscripts relating to Christ. With the aid of my interpreter, who translated from the Thibetan tongue, I carefully transcribed the verses as they were read by the Lama.

Entertaining no doubt of the authenticity of this narrative, written with the utmost precision by Brahmin historians and Buddhists of India and Nepal, my intention was to publish the translation on my return to Europe. With this object in view, I addressed myself to several well-known ecclesiastics, requesting them to revise my notes and tell me what they thought of the matter.

Monseigneur Platon, the celebrated archbishop of Kiew, believed my discovery to be of great importance; but he earnestly tried to dissuade me from giving

the memoirs publicity, declaring it would be against my own interests to do so.

Why? This the venerable prelate refused to explain. Our conversation, however, having taken place in Russia, where censorship would have placed its veto on a work of this kind, I determined to wait.

A year later I chanced to be in Rome. Here I submitted the manuscript to a cardinal standing high in the estimation of the Holy Father.

"Why should you print this?" he said, didactically; "nobody will attach much importance to it, and you will create numberless enemies thereby. You are still young, however. If you need money, I can obtain some compensation for these notes, enough to remunerate you for your loss of time and expenditure." Naturally enough, I refused the offer.

In Paris I laid my project before Cardinal Rotelli, whom I had met in Constantinople. He also opposed the publication of my work, under pretext that it would be premature. "The church," he added, "suffers too deeply from this new current of atheistic ideas; and you would only furnish new food to the calumniators and detractors of the evangelical doctrine. I tell you this in the interest of all Christian churches."

I then called on M. Jules Simon, who found my communication most interesting, and advised me to

consult M. Renan in regard to the best means of publishing these memoirs.

The very next day I found myself seated in the study of the great philosopher. At the end of the interview M. Renan proposed that I should intrust him with the memoirs in question, that he might make a report on them to the Academy. This proposition, as the reader will understand, was most seductive and flattering; yet I took away the work with me, saying I wished to revise it once more—the fact being that I feared if I accepted this association I would only receive the bare honor of discovering the chronicles, while the illustrious author of the "Life of Jesus" would reap the glory of the publication and of the commentaries. Believing myself sufficiently prepared to publish the narrative by adding my own notes, I finally declined the courteous offer made to me. That I might not, however, wound the feelings of the great master, whom I deeply respected, I resolved to await his death, which could not be far off, judging from his feebleness. Soon after the death of M. Renan, I wrote to M. Jules Simon, and again sought his advice. His reply was that I should judge for myself of the expediency of giving publicity to the memoirs.

I therefore prepared my notes, and now publish them, reserving the right to attest the authenticity of

these chronicles. In my commentaries I carefully develop the arguments which prove the good faith and sincerity of the Buddhist compilers. It only remains for me to add that before criticising my work scientific societies can, without much expense, organize an expedition whose mission it will be to study these manuscripts in the locality in which they are to be found, and thus verify their historical value.

NICOLAS NOTOVITCH.

P. S.— In the course of my travels I took many curious photographs, but when I came to examine the negatives on my return to India I was dismayed to find that they were absolutely destroyed.

THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

A JOURNEY TO THIBET.

DURING my sojourn in India, I found many opportunities to mingle and converse with the Buddhists; and so thoroughly was my curiosity excited by their accounts of Thibet that I resolved to immediately undertake a journey to that almost unknown country. With this view, I chose a route extending through Kashmir, a country I had often desired to explore.

On October 14, 1887, I took my place in the compartment of a railway train literally filled with soldiers, and traveled from Lahore to Rawal-Pindi, reaching the latter place at noon the following day. Having recovered from the fatigues of the journey and visited the city, which, owing to its permanent garrison, presents the appearance of a war camp, I turned my attention to the purchase of such articles as are necessary on a journey where railways are unknown, and horses furnish the only means of conveyance. With the aid of my negro servant, Pondichery, I packed

my luggage, procured a tonga (a two-wheeled vehicle drawn by a pair of horses), and, having made myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit on the rear seat, began my journey over the picturesque route leading to Kashmir.

Our tonga was soon rolling rapidly along the magnificent road, though no little dexterity was required in going through a large caravan of soldiers belonging to a detachment traveling from the camp into the city, with their cumbersome luggage loaded on the backs of camels. Soon we came to the end of the Punjab Valley, and turning into a sinuous path began to climb the Outer Himalayan Range. The acclivity became more and more abrupt as we ascended, while the magnificent panorama stretching away beneath our feet grew less and less distinct. The last rays of the setting sun were gilding the summit of the mountains as our tonga gaily emerged from the winding road on the crest of the mountain, below which nestles the pretty little town of Murree, a summer resort much in favor with the families of English officials, on account of its shade and comparative coolness.

The journey from Murree to Serinagur may be accomplished by tonga; but at the approach of winter, when all Europeans desert Kashmir, the tonga service is suspended. Having undertaken

my journey near the end of the warm season, I greatly astonished the English tourists whom I met on their way back to India; but their efforts to discover the object of my journey remained fruitless.

The roadway not being entirely constructed yet, I was obliged, not without considerable difficulty, however, to hire saddle-horses. Night had already fallen when we started on our descent from Murree, which stands at an altitude of five thousand feet. The road was dark, and deeply rutted by recent rains, and the journey was anything but cheerful, as the horses faithfully plodded along, guided by instinct rather than sight. As night deepened, rain began to fall in torrents; and the shadows cast by the century oaks surrounding us shrouded us in impenetrable darkness. Fearing that we might stray apart and get lost, we kept up a continual shouting as we rode on. Above us we knew, though we could not pierce the thick gloom, that gigantic masses of rock overhung the path, while to the left a rushing torrent thundered down over a precipice hidden by the trees.

We had waded through the thick mud for more than two hours, chilled to the bones by the icy rain, when the distant light of a fire at last appeared to revive our strength. But, alas! how

very deceiving such lights prove in the wilderness of the mountain! One moment it seems almost within reach of your hand, but suddenly disappears, to reappear, sometimes at your left, then at your right, sometimes above, then below you, as if it took pleasure in tantalizing the weary traveler. Meanwhile, the road makes a thousand turns, zigzagging in every direction, while the motionless fire seems animated with perpetual motion, the obscurity being so dense that we fail to see the continual changes in the direction of the road.

I had regretfully abandoned all hope of ever reaching this so earnestly longed-for fire, when it suddenly reappeared so close to us that the horses involuntarily stopped short.

Here I must pause to express my gratitude and offer my sincere thanks to the English for their kind thoughtfulness in erecting along the roads a number of small bungalows, in which the weary traveler is glad to find shelter and rest. These isolated inns possess little comfort, it is true, but the exhausted pilgrim does not even notice the lack of luxuries, so delighted is he to find a clean dry room in which to stretch his tired limbs.

The Hindoos evidently did not expect travelers at that advanced hour of the night and at that

season, for they had carried away the keys, and we were compelled to force open the door of the bungalow.

I immediately threw myself on the bed, which consisted of one pillow and a piece of wet carpet, and was soon buried in slumber. At dawn, after partaking of tea and a little food, we resumed our way under a scorching sun. Now and then we passed through a village, standing in some magnificent defile, or along the winding path that penetrated into the very bosom of the mountains, until we finally reached the Jhelum, whose sparkling waters flow gracefully over a rocky bed, and whose course is confined within a picturesque gorge that sometimes rises almost to the azure vault of the Himalayan heavens—heavens wonderfully pure and serene in this region.

At noon we reached a hamlet called Tongua, where the houses are strung along the river-bank and appear like so many boxes with façade openings. Cosmetics and all kinds of merchandise are retailed. The place literally swarms with Hindoos, each bearing on his brow the diversely colored mark of his particular caste. Here, too, is seen the dignified Kashmirian, clad in a long white tunic and an equally snowy turban.

In consideration of a good round sum of money,

I procured the loan of a Hindoo cabriolet from a Kashmirian. This equipage is so constructed that one must sit with crossed legs, or Turkish fashion, while the seat is so small that it will barely accommodate two persons. The absence of a back, moreover, renders this mode of locomotion extremely dangerous. Such was my anxiety to reach the end of my journey, however, that I unhesitatingly climbed on this circular table — so awkwardly perched on two wheels and drawn by a single horse — rather than delay my departure one unnecessary day.

But I had barely gone a half-kilometer when I seriously began to regret my saddle-horse, so fatiguing and difficult did I find it to keep my legs crossed and maintain my equilibrium. Unfortunately, it was too late to turn back.

Night had fallen when I arrived at Horis, exhausted with fatigue and bruised by the jolting, my limbs feeling as though they were the central point of attack from millions of ants, and too utterly wretched to enjoy the picturesque scenery opening before our eyes as we advanced along the Jhelum, on the banks of which arises a chain of wooded mountains on one side, while the other is bordered by a rocky precipice.

At Horis I met a caravan of pilgrims on their way from Mecca. Imagining that I was a physi-

cian, and hearing of my hurry to reach the Ladak, they begged me to join them, which I promised to do after reaching Serinagur.

I left the village on horseback at dawn, after a night spent seated upright on my bed, holding a lighted torch in my hand, and not daring to close my eyes, lest I should be stung by the myriads of scorpions and centipedes which infested the bungalows. Though heartily ashamed of the terror inspired in me by those insects, I could not sufficiently overcome it to compose myself to sleep.

Who can point out the dividing-line between courage and cowardice? Who can say where the one begins and the other ends?

I make no boast of bravery, but I am not a coward. And yet, the insurmountable fear aroused in me by that species of small animals totally banished sleep from my eyes in spite of my extreme fatigue.

As our horses slowly advanced through the flat valley, with the sun beaming warmly on us from over the mountains, I gradually fell asleep in the saddle. I was suddenly aroused by a chilly breeze some time later, and found that we were ascending a mountain-path in the midst of a vast forest, which sometimes opened to give us a glimpse of an impetuous torrent, with pictur-

esque surroundings, then quickly closed again, concealing from our view the mountains, the sky, the entire country in fact, but giving us instead the songs of myriads of its bright-plumaged birds.

We emerged from the forest at about noon, descended into a small hamlet on the river-bank, and having refreshed ourselves with a cold lunch, resumed the journey. As we passed the market-place I stopped with the intention of purchasing a glass of warm milk from a Hindoo who was squatting beside a large pail of boiling milk; but what was my surprise when he proposed that I should take the pail with its contents, declaring that I had defiled the liquid.

"I only want a glass of milk, not the pail," I explained.

"According to our laws," replied the Hindoo, "if any one not belonging to our caste gazes fixedly at any object, or article of food, we must throw away the one and wash the other. You have defiled my milk, O Sahib, and no one will drink it; for not only did you gaze at it, but you also pointed your finger in its direction."

Having long examined his merchandise to make sure it was real milk, as well as pointed out from which side of the pail I desired to have it poured, I stood convicted; and as I always respect the

laws and customs of strange nations, I readily gave him a rupee, the full price of the spilt milk, although I had taken but one glass. The incident taught me a lesson, however, and I was never again guilty of fixing my eyes on the food of a Hindoo.

There is no religious doctrine more encumbered with ceremonies, laws, and commentaries than Brahminism. While each religion possesses but one Bible, one gospel, or one Koran, from which the Hebrews, the Christians, and the Mohammedans borrow their faith, the Brahmin Hindoos possess so great a number of commentaries in folio that the most learned Brahmin that ever existed scarcely had time to reach the tenth.

Leaving aside the four books of the Vedas, the Pouranas, written in Sanscrit, and composed of eighteen volumes, containing four hundred thousand stanzas, which treat of law, theology, medicine, of the creation, the destruction and regeneration of the world, etc.; the vast Chastras, which treat of mathematics, grammar, etc.; the Oupovedas, Oupanichadas, Oupopouranas, which serve as explanation to the Pouranas, and a host of other commentaries in many volumes, there still remain the twelve large books containing the laws of Manou, grandson of Brahma. These books not only relate to penal

and civil laws, but also to canonical regulations, which impose on their adepts such an infinite number of ceremonies that we can not but admire the unalterable patience of the Hindoos in their observation of the precepts dictated by Saint Manou.

Manou was incontestably a great legislator and profound thinker, but he has written so extensively that he frequently contradicts himself in the same page. The Brahmins do not even remark this, and the poor Hindoos, whose mission it is to labor for the support of that caste, humbly obey their clergy, whose commands enjoin them to never touch a man not belonging to their own caste; while a stranger is absolutely forbidden to fix his attention on anything owned by the Hindoos.

By this adherence to the strict sense of the law, the Hindoo imagines that his food is contaminated when it becomes the point of attraction to a stranger. And yet, even as late as the period of its second birth, Brahminism was a purely monotheistic religion, recognizing but one infinite and indivisible God. But, as in all ages and religions, the clergy, taking advantage of their privileged position, gradually enacted laws of their own and instituted different forms of external worship, hoping thereby to influence the ignorant masses.

By degrees, the principles of monotheism — of which so clear a conception is given by the Vedas — degenerated into an absurd, unlimited series of gods, goddesses, semi-gods, genii, angels, and demons, all represented by idols as varied in form as they are repulsive to the sight. These people, formerly as proud as their religion was pure and grand, are now drifting into a complete state of idiocy, the day scarcely sufficing for the accomplishment of all the duties prescribed by the ecclesiastical laws.

It may well be positively asserted that the Hindoos subsist merely to provide for the principal sect of Brahmins, who have grasped the temporal power formerly held by the independent sovereigns of the people. While governing India, the English never interfere with this phase of public life, and the Brahmins take advantage of this to inspire in the nation the hope of a better future.

The sun soon vanished behind the towering peaks, and the shadows of night immediately fell over the picturesque scenery we were traversing. The deep hush of sleep then also spread over the narrow valley lapped by the Jhelum. The road, winding along a narrow ledge of steep rocks, insensibly melted from our view, mountains and trees became one confused somber mass, and the

stars began to peep from the sky above. We alighted from our horses and groped our way along the mountain-sides, fearing every moment to be dashed into the yawning precipice at our feet.

At an advanced hour of the night we crossed a bridge and climbed up a steep incline leading to the Ouri bungalow, which stands in complete isolation on those heights. The following day we traversed a charming region; still skirting the river-bank, we came to a sharp bend, where we found the ruins of a Saic fortress, seemingly grieving over the ashes of its glorious past. In a small valley, almost concealed in the midst of the surrounding mountains, we found a bungalow, with its door invitingly opened in welcome; and not far away we suddenly came into the camp of a cavalry regiment belonging to the army of the Maharaja of Kashmir.

On learning that I was a Russian, the officers courteously invited me to breakfast with them. It was on this occasion that I had the pleasure of forming the acquaintance of Colonel Brown, who was the first to compile a dictionary of the Afghan-Pouchtou tongue.

Being extremely anxious to reach Serinagur as soon as possible, I at once resumed my journey, through a most picturesque region lying at the

foot of the mountains. To my eyes, so wearied by the monotony of the preceding scenery, the inhabited valley that now stretched before us, with its two-story buildings, its gardens, and cultivated fields, came as a positive relief. At a short distance, hidden by a range of high hillocks, which we crossed toward evening, begins the celebrated "Vale of Kashmir."

How can I describe the magnificent scenery that opened before my eyes as I reached the brow of the last hill that separates the "Vale of Kashmir" from the mountainous country I had just traversed! A dazzling picture held me spellbound!

The "Vale of Kashmir," which is everywhere populated, and whose limits are lost in the horizon, is walled in by the high Himalaya Mountains. At the rising and setting of the sun the zone of eternal snows appears like a silver ring encircling this rich, beautiful plateau, which is intersected by many fine roads and numberless sparkling rivers.

The gardens, the hillocks, and the lake, with its many islands covered with buildings of presumptuous style, all contribute to make the traveler believe he has been suddenly transported into another world. He is strongly inclined to tarry here forever, thinking he must have found the

paradise, or enchanted land, of his nursery days.

The veil of night soon spread over the valley, merging mountains, gardens, and lakes into one dark mass, with a few distant lights glimmering here and there like stars. I descended the valley in the direction of the Jhelum, which has cut its way through a narrow defile in the mountains to unite its waters with those of the River Indus.

A legend exists in which it is claimed that the valley was once an inland sea, the waters of which forced a passage through the environing prison-walls, leaving no trace but a few small ponds and the Jhelum River, which empties into the Indus. Its banks are almost hidden by the numerous long, narrow boats which serve as shelter for the families of the owners the year round.

From this point, Serinagur may be reached in one day on horseback, but the journey by boat consumes a day and a half. I nevertheless chose to travel by water; and having procured a boat, after much haggling about prices with the proprietor, I installed myself at its prow on a piece of carpet, protected by a sort of awning.

We left at midnight, the boat gliding toward Serinagur. At the other extremity of the bark a Hindoo was quietly preparing me a cup of tea, while I fell into a dreamless sleep, happy in the

thought that I was advancing on my journey without further exertion and fatigue.

I was aroused by the warm caresses of the rising sun, and opened my eyes on a glimpse of nature that charmed me into ecstasies: a bank of velvety verdure; the distant outlines of snow-capped peaks; pretty villages, nestling at the foot of the mountain; a crystalline sheet of water; a pure, balmy atmosphere, which I breathed with avidity; the warbling of an infinity of birds; a sky of transcendent purity; behind me the swish of the water under the impulsion of a rounded oar dexterously handled by a beautiful woman, with wonderful eyes and cheeks delicately bronzed by the sun. All these cast a spell upon me, and I totally forgot the reason of my presence there. In that one moment I ceased to long for the end of my journey; and yet, what endless privations and perils there still remained to face and endure! The boat glided swiftly down the stream, the magnificent scenery unceasingly unfolding before my eyes to melt away beyond the confines of the horizon, where it seemingly became part of the mountains already passed; then, far away, in the direction toward which we were drifting, another glorious picture seemed to unroll from the mountain-side, a picture that grew more and more vivid as we were carried onward.

Twilight was now gathering fast about us, and still I did not weary of the contemplation of this glorious bit of nature, which awakened in my heart the sweetest recollections of my youth and childhood. How beautiful indeed were those days, now forever gone!

As we neared Serinagur we saw more and more of those pretty villages buried in verdure.

As the boat came to a stop a number of people flocked to the river-bank, the men wearing turbans, the women in small caps, and long chemises reaching to the ground, and the children in a state of nudity that strongly reminded us of the garments in vogue with our first parents.

A long row of boats and floating houses, in which dwell entire families, lines the stream at the entrance of the city. As we quietly glided between these wooden huts the last rays of the setting sun were gilding the snow-covered summits of the distant mountains.

Life here seems to cease with the setting of the sun. Thousands of gaily colored dungas and banglas (boats), adorned with palanquins, were moored to the quay, while Kashmirians of both sexes, attired in the primitive costume of Adam and Eve, were performing their twilight ablutions absolutely unrestrained by the presence of others; for the importance of the rite they were

executing was far greater to them than that of all human prejudices.

On the morning of October 20th I opened my eyes in a clean cozy room overlooking the river, which sparkled and glistened beneath the glorious sun of Kashmir. My object not being to describe my voyage in these pages, I will say nothing of the valleys, the paradise of lilacs; of the enchanted islands, the many historical palaces, the picturesque pagodas, so redolent of mystery; the coquettish villages, seemingly lost in vast gardens; or of the majestic peaks of the giants of the Himalaya, rising on all sides and buried beneath a white shroud of eternal snow. I shall merely note the preparations made in view of a new journey in the direction of Thibet. I spent six days in Serinagur, making long excursions into its beautiful surrounding country, examining the numerous ruins that still stand as evidence of the ancient prosperity of that region, and studying the curious customs of the land.

The Kashmir, as well as the other provinces attached to it, such as the Baltistan, the Ladak, etc., are vassals of England. They formerly made part of the possessions of the "Lion of Punjab," Randjid Sing; but at his death English troops invaded Lahore, the capital of the

Punjab, separated Kashmir from the rest of the empire, and under pretense of hereditary possession and in consideration of one hundred and sixty millions of francs, ceded it to Goubab-Sing, a relation of the dead sovereign, on whom was conferred the title of Maharaja. At the time of my voyage, the reigning Maharaja was Pertab-Sing, grandson of Goubab, who resides in Jamooee, on the southern slope of the Himalayas.

The celebrated "Vale of Kashmir," which is eighty-five miles in length and twenty-five miles in breadth, enjoyed its days of true glory and prosperity during the reign of the Great Mogul, whose court gathered there to enjoy the rustic pleasures of the country in the cottages still standing on the small islands of the lake.

A large number of the Maharajas of Hindoostan formerly spent the summer months here also, and took part in the sumptuous round of festivities given by the Great Mogul; but time has wrought a woful change, and the "happy valley" is now nothing more than a place of resort for mendicants. Weeds and the moldiness from all sorts of noxious plants have covered the limpid water of the lake, the wild juniper bush has choked all vegetation on the islands, palaces and pavilions have nothing left but the remembrance of their dead grandeur, dust

and rank growths overspread the ruins like a mantle. The surrounding mountains, with their white pinnacles, seem mournfully sad and patiently waiting for better days to burst forth in all their immortal beauty. The inhabitants, hitherto intellectual, handsome, and cleanly, are tending toward a state of idiocy; being filthy and lazy, and governed by the lash instead of the sword. The Kashmirians have so frequently been exposed to pillage and invasion, and have known so many masters, that they have become indifferent to everything; spending their time near their huts or on the river bank gossiping, or quietly making their celebrated shawls and cutting designs on gold or silver. The women are extremely melancholy, and bear an expression of inconceivable sadness on their features. Misery and squalor reign everywhere. The fine men and beautiful women of Kashmir are filthy and ragged beyond conception; and the dress of both sexes, in winter and summer alike, consists only of a long heavy gown, with wide flowing sleeves, resembling nothing more than a shirt. This garment is removed only when completely worn out, and never — under any consideration — is it washed, giving the white turbans of the male population a dazzling whiteness in contrast with their stained, greasy gowns.

A deep sadness overcomes the traveler as he notes the contrast between this rich, opulent country and its ragged inhabitants.

Serinagur (the city of the sun), or Cashmere as it is sometimes called from the name of the country, is the capital and is situated on the Jhelum, along the bank of which it extends southward over a distance of five kilometers.

The two-story houses, which shelter a population of one hundred thousand inhabitants, are constructed of wood, and stand in close proximity to the water. The town itself is not more than two kilometers in breadth, and everybody lives on the river whose banks are united by ten or twelve bridges. Steps lead from every house to the waters of the Jhelum, where nearly the entire day is spent in ablutions, bathing, and washing utensils — the latter consisting merely of two or three brass jugs. A portion of the inhabitants practice the Mohammedan religion, while two-thirds are Brahmans; there are also a few Buddhists, though the number is extremely limited.

The time had now arrived to begin my preparations for a journey into the unknown. Having purchased different kinds of conserves, a few casks of wine, and many other things found indispensable in the course of a journey through a country as sparsely populated as Thibet, I

packed the whole in boxes, hired ten carriers and one interpreter, bought myself a horse, and fixed the date of departure for October 27th. To enliven the road I procured from a Frenchman, Monsiur Peicheau, superintendent of the Maharaja's vineyard, a large dog which had already accompanied my friends Bonvalot, Capus, and Pepin, the well-known explorers through the Pamir. Wishing to shorten the journey by two days, I started the carriers at dawn from the other side of the lake, while I crossed by boat, rejoining the caravan and my horse at the foot of the chain of mountains that separated the Serinagur Valley from the Gorge of the Sindh.

Never shall I forget the tortures we endured in climbing, almost on all fours, to the summit of a peak three thousand feet high. The carriers were exhausted and out of breath, and I trembled lest one of them might roll down the declivity at any moment with his burden, while my heart fairly ached at sight of my poor dog, Pamir, who stumbled along with his tongue lolling out, whining and falling by the way at every few steps. I forgot my own fatigue to caress and encourage the poor animal, who looked at me piteously, bravely went on a few steps more, and again fell exhausted.

Night had fallen when we reached the pinnacle

of the mountain, where we greedily flung ourselves on the snow to quench our thirst. Having taken a brief rest, we began the descent through a dense pine forest, hoping to gain the village of Haïena at the foot of the defile before the appearance of beasts of prey.

A straight well-kept road leads from Serinagur to Haïena, going directly north to Ganderbal, where it turns abruptly to the east, after having skirted the Sindh and traversed a country of luxurious vegetation to Kangan, which is six miles from Haïena; toward which place I was journeying by a more direct route through a pass three thousand feet high, but which saved both time and distance.

My first steps into the unknown were marked by an incident that left a most horrible impression upon me. The defile of the Sindh, which is sixty miles long, is particularly celebrated for its inhospitable inhabitants, among which panthers, tigers, leopards, black bears, wolves, and jackals abound. The snow having unfortunately just spread its white mantle over the summits of the chain, these redoubtable foes of man had been forced to seek shelter in their lairs somewhat lower down.

We were silently following the narrow winding path through the pines and centenary birch trees,

the grinding sound of our footsteps alone breaking the deep monotonous hush of the night, when suddenly, in our very midst as it seemed, a prolonged howl awoke the echoes of the forest. Our little band stopped short and listened.

"A panther!" gasped my servant, who stood trembling by my side.

The small caravan of twelve men stood with bated breath, paralyzed with fear. I now remembered that at our last resting place I had entrusted my revolver to one of the carriers and given my rifle to another; the thought filled me with poignant regret and alarm, and I inquired in a low tone for one of these men. A more terrible cry rang through the night at this moment, then a crash like the fall of a heavy body was heard, succeeded by a shriek of agony that froze the blood in our veins. We guessed rather than saw the horrible struggle going on between the unfortunate man and the famished beast of prey.

"Sahib, take the gun," whispered a voice near me.

I feverishly clutched the Winchester. But, alas, I could not see two feet from me. Another cry, followed by a stifled roar, guided me; and I crept in its direction, equally divided between my desire to kill a panther and the horrible dread of being flayed alive. Nobody dared to move; and

it was not until fully five minutes had elapsed that one of the men thought of lighting a match.

Remembering the dread of fire usually evinced by wild beasts, I then caught up a few handfuls of brush-wood and set flame to it.

Not more than ten feet from us, we then saw the unfortunate victim stretched on the ground, his limbs completely torn away by the claws of a beautiful panther which still crouched unmoved with a piece of flesh between its jaws. Near by lay a cask of wine completely crushed.

Scarcely had I shouldered my gun, however, when the beast of prey sprang to its feet, dropped its bleeding morsel of food and turned as if ready to leap upon me; then with a blood-curdling howl, it suddenly veered about and disappeared in the thicket.

My coolies, who all this time had been prostrated to the ground by terror, now gradually recovered from their fright and prepared to go on. Having gathered a bunch of dry underbrush, placed some matches at hand, and cocked our guns, we hurried toward Haïena, leaving the remains of the unfortunate Hindoo behind us in fear of sharing the same fate.

One hour later, we came out of the forest into the open country. I immediately had my tent put up under a leafy plane-tree and an enormous

fire built; this being the only means of protection that could be used against the wild beasts whose howls came from every direction about us freezing the blood in our veins. Meanwhile my dog crouched trembling at my feet; but, once in the tent, he quickly regained his courage and spent the rest of the night in incessant barking.

That night was a terrible one to me, as I sat upright with my rifle clutched tightly in my hand, listening to the horrible howling and roaring that filled the air with deafening echoes. A few panthers approached our camp in response to Pamir's bark, but none dared to come within shooting distance.

I had left Serinagur at the head of eleven carriers, of whom four carried as many casks of wine, four more the clothes needed for the journey, another my weapons, and still another different utensils, while a last served as courier and guide, as he frequently went forward to reconnoiter. The latter's name was Chicari, which signifies, "he who accompanies the hunter and picks up the game." But owing to his cowardice and utter ignorance of the country, I dismissed him, with some of the other men the next morning, retaining only four carriers with me. I quickly replaced them with horses, and slowly proceeded toward the village of Gounde.

What beautiful nature unfolds itself in the gorge of the Sindh, and how beloved it is by the hunter. Besides the larger beasts of prey, there are also found deer, moufflon, and an immense variety of birds, among which may be mentioned the golden, the red, and the snow-white pheasant, large partridges, and immense eagles.

The villages along the Sindh are not remarkable for their dimensions, most of them consisting of but ten to twenty wretched huts, occupied by ragged families that bear the stamp of poverty. The domestic animals all belong to an exceedingly small species.

Crossing the stream at Sambal I stopped near the Gounde village for a relay of horses. In some of the small places, I was absolutely refused a change of horses until I made use of my whip, a proceeding which at once imposed respect and obedience. Money also proved a most powerful agent in attaining this object, inspiring a servile obedience and a desire to execute my orders that was truly astonishing.

Gold and the lash are the real sovereigns of the Orient; without them the Great Mogul himself could have had no preponderance.

Meanwhile, night was gathering fast and I was anxious to cross the defile that separates the villages of Gogangan and Sonamarg, the road

being in a horrible condition and infested with wild beasts that come to the very doors of the dwelling houses in search of prey under cover of night. The spot is fertile and beautiful, yet few dare make it their home on account of the frequent visits of the panther among the domestic animals.

At the extremity of the defile, near Tchokodar, or Thajwas, I caught sight of two dark masses which I could not at first distinguish in the semi-obscurity, but which, on closer inspection, proved to be two bears following a cub on the roadway. Being alone with my servant — the caravan having remained behind — I hesitated somewhat in attacking them with my single rifle, but long excursions on the mountains had strongly developed the instincts of the hunter in me, and I resolved to brave the dangers. To leap from the saddle, fire, and reload, without even verifying the result of the first shot, was the work of a second. One of the bears sprang toward me, but a second shot changed his course, and he disappeared. Still holding my loaded rifle, I cautiously advanced in the direction in which I had fired and found a bear lying on its side, with a young cub playing near. Another shot brought him down in his turn, and I thus procured two beautiful skins of jet black.

This meeting delayed us two full hours, and night had completely fallen when I pitched my tent near Tchokodar, which I again left at the first streak of dawn for Baltal, still following the course of the Sindh.

The magnificent scenery of the "golden prairie" comes to an abrupt end here with a village of the same name — sona (gold) and marg (prairie). The slope of Zodgi-la is then immediately reached — a steep elevation of eleven thousand five hundred feet — beyond which the entire country assumes a severe, inhospitable character. My hunting adventures were now at an end, having seen nothing this side of Baltal but wild goats. Game might have been found in plenty by penetrating into the very heart of these mysterious mountains, but I had neither the time nor desire to leave the highway on such dangerous expeditions, and I tranquilly continued my journey toward Ladak.

What an abrupt transition I experienced, in passing from the smiling nature and fine population of Kashmir to the barren gloomy rocks and deformed beardless inhabitants of the Ladak!

The country into which I had just penetrated stands at an altitude of eleven to twelve thousand feet, descending to a level of eight thousand at Kargil.

The ascent of Zodgi-La is extremely difficult, being an almost perpendicular wall, while, at some points, the road winds over projecting rocks not more than a meter in breadth, bordering on a precipice of unfathomable depth. Heaven preserve the traveler from a fall! In some places long poles have been introduced into the rocks and covered with earth. Brr—! At the thought that the dislodging of the smallest stone from the mountain-side, or the oscillation of the poles might precipitate the structure into the yawning abyss below, carrying with it the intrepid person who might have ventured on this perilous path, my heart almost stopped its beating, and it was with a sigh of relief that I finally came to the end of the dangerous path.

Having crossed the glaciers, we made a halt in the valley and began preparations to spend the night near a post-hut, amid cheerless surroundings of eternal ice and snow.

Beyond Baltal distance is determined by means of daks — postal stations established to facilitate the forwarding of mail. These are low huts situated at a distance of seven kilometers from each other, where a man remains permanently on duty in each. The postal service between the Kashmir and Thibet is of the most primitive kind. The letters are inclosed in a leather bag and

placed in charge of a carrier, who rapidly travels over the seven kilometers allotted to him with a basket strapped to his back containing a number of these bags. This he hands over to another carrier, who, in his turn, accomplishes his task in a similar fashion. Neither rain nor snow can stop them, and the service is thus carried on with regularity between Kashmir and Thibet, and vice-versa, once a week. Each run is paid for at the rate of six annas (one franc), this being the compensation usually given merchandise carriers, although my servants carried a burden ten times as heavy. One is filled with compassion at sight of the pale, haggard faces of these weary men; but what can be done? It is the custom of the country, and strangers are powerless. Tea is brought from China in a similar way, a rapid and cheap means of transportation.

As we approached Montaiyan, I rejoined the caravan of Yarkandians which I had promised to accompany on their journey. They recognized me from afar and begged me to examine one of their companions who was very ill. I found him struggling in the throes of a burning fever, and waved my hands as a sign of despair; pointing to heaven to make them understand that human science and will was powerless now, and that God alone could save him. As they were journeying

very slowly, I left them once more with the intention of reaching Dras that evening, a town built in the depth of the valley on a river of the same name, near which is a small fort of extremely ancient construction, newly plastered, and guarded by three soldiers of the Maharaja's army.

Here I took shelter in the postal building; the only station in connection with the telegraphic wire laid from Serinagur to the heart of the Himalayas. From this time forward, I totally abandoned my tent at night and sought repose in the roadside inns, which, though repulsively filthy, could always boast of a huge chimney fire.

From Dras to Kargil the scenery is monotonous and disagreeable. The sunrise and sunset are glorious it is true, and the moonlight is magnificent, but the road is flat, endless, and beset with dangers.

Kargil is the chief town of the district and the residence of the governor of the division. The site is decidedly picturesque. Two turbulent streams, the Sourou and Wakka, dash noisely over their rocky beds and unite their rippling waters as they emerge from their respective gorges thus forming the Suru River, on the banks of which the mud buildings of Kargil are

constructed. A small fort, guarded by two or three soldiers, stands at the junction of the two streams.

Having procured fresh horses, I resumed my journey at sunrise by entering the Ladak, or Little Thibet. During this day's journey I crossed a shaky bridge, which, like all bridges in Kashmir, was rudely constructed of long beams resting on either banks, overlaid with fagots and slender poles, giving it the appearance of a somewhat primitive suspension bridge. Before long I reached a small plateau over which the road stretched for two kilometers, then gradually descended into the narrow valley of the Wakka, with its many tiny villages, the most picturesque of which is Paskium on the left bank of the river.

I was now treading Buddhist soil. The inhabitants of this part of the country are of the most simple and gentle character, seeming utterly in ignorance of what we term "quarreling" at home. Women are somewhat scarce; but the few we chanced to meet, by the expression of cheerfulness and prosperity reflected upon their countenances, presented a strong contrast to those I had so far seen in Kashmir or India. But this is not astonishing, since each of these women legitimately possesses from three to five husbands.

Polyandry is practiced throughout the country. However large a family may be, there is but one woman in the household; and if it does not consist of more than three persons, a bachelor may become a member of it by bringing material compensation into the house. The days allotted to each of the husbands are determined upon beforehand, and all perform their duties with scrupulous exactitude. The men, as a rule, are of weakly constitutions, with stooped shoulders and a general debilitated appearance, and scarcely ever pass middle age. In fact, I did not meet one single white-haired old man throughout my journey in the Ladak country.

That portion of the Kargil route which lies in the center of the Ladak, is of a more cheerful aspect than the country over which I had just traveled, being much enlivened by a number of small hamlets, but trees and verdure are unfortunately exceedingly scarce.

Twenty miles from Kargil, at the mouth of the defile formed by the swift current of the Wakka, is a small village called Chargol, in the center of which are three altars decked in bright colors (t'hortènes is the name they bear in Thibet). Below, near the river, is a mass of rocks forming long, thick walls, on which flat stones of divers colors have been thrown pell-mell, in the greatest

disorder. These stones are elaborately engraved with all sorts of prayers in Sanscrit, Thibetan, and Oudhist characters; and even Arabic inscriptions have sometimes been found in this mixture. Unperceived by my carriers, I surreptitiously abstracted a few of these stones which I subsequently placed in the palace of the Trocadero.

From Chargol on, these peculiar oblong piers are seen at every step. At the first streak of dawn I started on my way with fresh horses, coming to a halt near the convent (gonpa) of Moulbeck, which stands against a tall isolated rock overlooking the hamlet of Wakkha. Not far away towers another gigantic rock of peculiar form, which looks as if transported there by human hands, and bears on one side a carved image of Buddha several meters in height.

On this rock were placed a number of weather-cocks that served as a means of invocation. These labor-saving devices consist of wooden hoops draped with white or yellow material, and attached to a stick set vertically into the ground. The softest breeze will set them in motion, and the happy individual who possesses one of these contrivances is no longer obliged to recite his prayers, as everything that may be asked of the presiding god, by the believer, is written thereon.

Seen from a distance this white-plastered mon-

astery, standing in such strong relief against the gray rocks, and these whirling machines with their floating draperies, produce a very strange effect in that half-dead country.

Leaving my horses in the hamlet, and followed by my servant, I turned my steps in the direction of the convent, which was reached by a narrow stairway hewn into the solid rock. At the top of this steep flight, I was greeted by a corpulent Lama, with a fringe of scraggy beard beneath his chin — a characteristic of the Thibetan people — and exceedingly ugly features, but who received me with the utmost cordiality. His dress consisted of a yellow robe and a cloth cap of the same color with ear-laps. In his right hand he carried a brass prayer-wheel, which he set in motion from time to time without the least pause in the conversation. This constituted a perpetual prayer, which being communicated to the air was the more easily wafted to heaven by the aid of the elements. After crossing a long succession of low rooms, in which were shelved a variety of images of Buddha, all sorts and sizes buried beneath a thick mantle of dust, we finally emerged upon an open terrace, from which the eye rested on a most barren waste, interspersed with ledges of gray rocks, and traversed by a single road lost

in both directions beyond the limits of the horizon.

We were scarcely seated when an attendant appeared with hop-beer, or tchang, as it is called in this region, prepared within the walls of the monastery. This beverage gives the monks a quantity of superfluous flesh, which is considered by the people as a sign of particular favor from heaven.

The Thibetan language is generally spoken here. The origin of this tongue is enveloped in obscurity; the accepted theory, however, is that a king of Thibet, who reigned in the days of Mohammed, undertook the creation of a universal language to be used by all the followers of Buddha. With this end in view he simplified the Sanscrit grammar, composed an alphabet containing an infinite number of signs, and thus formed the basis of a tongue of exceedingly easy pronunciation, but of most complicated orthography; no less than eight characters being required to represent a single sound. The modern literature of Thibet is all written in this language. The Thibetan tongue in its purity, moreover, is spoken in the Ladak and in Oriental Thibet only; a dialect formed from a mixture of the mother tongue and a variety of idioms borrowed from the people of adjacent regions being used in all other parts of the country.

There always exist two tongues, even in every-day life, among the Thibetans; one being utterly incomprehensible to the women, while the other is spoken by the entire nation. The Thibetan tongue, in all its purity and integrity, can be found in the monasteries only.

The monks much prefer European visitors to Mohammedans; and when I asked the reason of this preference, the Lama replied:

"The Mohammedans have nothing in common with our religion. In their recent victorious campaign, they converted, by force, a number of Buddhists to Islamism; and it will require great efforts on our part to bring back these descendants of Buddhists into the path of the true God. As to Europeans, it is an entirely different matter. Not only do they profess the essential principles of monotheism, but they also form part of the rank of worshipers of Buddha in almost the same degree as the Thibetan Lamas themselves. The only error of the Christians is that after adopting the great doctrine of Buddha, they, at the very outset, completely separated themselves from him and created another Dalaï-Lama; while ours alone has received the divine favor of seeing the majesty of Buddha face to face, and the power of serving as intermediary between heaven and earth."

"Who is this Dalaï-Lama of the Christians of whom you speak?" I asked. "We have a 'Son of God' to whom we address our fervent prayers. It is to him we have recourse, that he may intercede for us near our one and indivisible God."

"It is not to him I referred, sahib," he replied. "We also respect him whom you recognize as the son of an only God, only we do not regard him as such, but as the excellent being, the chosen one from among all. Buddha did, indeed, incarnate himself with his intelligence in the sacred person of Issa, who, without the aid of fire and sword, went forth to propagate our great and true religion through the entire world. I speak of your terrestrial Dalaï-Lama, to whom you have given the title of Father of the Church. There lies the great sin; may it be remitted to the sheep that have strayed from the fold into the evil path," concluded the Lama fervently, as he once more set his prayer-wheel in motion.

I understood that he alluded to the Pope.

"You have said that a son of Buddha, Issa, the chosen one, propagated your religion throughout the world. Who then is he?" I inquired.

The Lama opened his eyes in profound amazement at this question, and muttered something I could not catch, then murmured almost unintelligibly:

"Issa is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas; he is greater than any of the Dalaï-Lamas, for he constitutes a part of the spirituality of the Lord. It is he who has instructed you, who has brought back frivolous souls to God, who has rendered you worthy of the blessings of the Creator, who has endowed each creature with the knowledge of good and evil. His name and his deeds have been recorded in our sacred writings, and, whilst reading of his great existence spent in the midst of erring people, we weep over the horrible sin of the pagans, who assassinated him after putting him to the most cruel tortures."

I was forcibly struck by the Lama's words—the prophet Issa, his tortures and death, our Christian Dalaï-Lama, the recognition of Christianity by the Buddhists, all combined to make me think more and more of the career of Jesus Christ—and I begged my interpreter to omit nothing of the Lama's conversation.

"Where are these sacred writings, and by whom were they compiled?" I asked.

"The principal rolls," said the monk, "written in India and Nepal at different epochs, according to the course of events, are at Lassa and number many thousands. In some of the larger convents, there are copies made by the

Lamas at different periods during their stay at Lassa, and later presented to their convents as souvenirs of their visits to the great master, our Dalaï-Lama."

"Do you not possess any of these copies relating to the prophet Issa?"

"No, we do not possess any. Our convent is of little importance, and the Lamas have collected but a few hundred manuscripts since its foundation. The large cloisters possess thousands of them, but they are sacred things, and you can not see them anywhere."

After a few minutes more conversation, I returned to the camp, reflecting deeply on what had been said by the Lama.

Issa, the prophet of Buddhists! How could that have been? Being of Jewish origin, he dwelt in Palestine and Egypt; and the scripture contains not a word, not the slightest allusion to the part played by Buddhism in the education of Jesus.

I determined to visit every convent in Thibet, hoping to gather more ample information concerning the prophet Issa and perhaps find copies of documents relating to him.

Without being aware of it, we traversed the Namykala Pass at an altitude of thirteen thousand feet, from which we descended into the val-

ley of the Salinoumah River. Turning southward we reached Karbou, leaving numerous villages behind us and on the other bank. Among these was Chagdoom, perched on the summit of a rugged cliff in a singularly picturesque situation. All the houses of this little town being white, and of two to three stories in height, it presents an air of most festive gaiety, which, however, is a common feature of all the villages of the Ladak.

While journeying through Kashmir, the European loses almost all notion of his national architecture in the monotonous sameness of the low square huts of the people; in the Ladak, on the contrary, he is agreeably surprised by the sight of neat houses of two and three stories, with quadruple windows, which remind him strongly of those of European provinces.

Not far from Karbou, standing on two perpendicular rocks of gigantic dimensions, are the ruins of a little town or village destroyed by a disastrous storm and an earthquake; although the remains of the walls show that their solidity certainly left nothing to be desired. The next day I passed another station and crossed the Fotu-La Pass, at an altitude of thirteen thousand five hundred feet, on the summit of which is built a small t'hortène altar. From thence, following

the dry bed of a torrent, I descended into a hamlet called Lamayure, which springs up unexpectedly before the eyes of the traveler. A convent, seemingly glued to the face of the rocky cliff and held there by miraculous intervention, dominates the village. Stairways are unknown in this monastery, ropes being used to ascend and descend from one floor to another; and the only means of communication with the outer world is through an endless labyrinth of passages and corridors. Directly beneath the convent windows, which appear like huge nests suspended from an isolated rock, is a small inn of uninviting aspect which offers little comfort to the traveler. Hardly had I stretched myself upon the carpet in my room when it was invaded by a number of yellow-robed monks, who questioned me closely regarding the object of my journey, the country from which I came, etc., concluding by inviting me to accompany them.

In spite of my fatigue, I accepted the invitation and followed them up the steep passages hewn in the solid rock, encumbered by an infinity of prayer-wheels which I involuntarily set in motion as I passed. These devices are thus placed to save the passer-by any loss of time in prayer; and a stranger might be led to suppose that worldly affairs absorbed their entire day, leaving

no time for prayer. Many pious Buddhists utilize the current of rivers for this purpose; and I have frequently seen long rows of these cylinders, covered with invocations, placed on river banks, so that the steady flow of water might keep them in constant movement, and thus exempt their owners from the obligation of praying.

I finally found myself seated on a bench in a dimly lighted room, whose walls were adorned with the inevitable statues of Buddha, books, and prayer-wheels, with the loquacious monks eagerly explaining the signification of each object.

"And these volumes treat of religion, no doubt?" I ventured, during a pause.

"Yes," was the reply; "they treat of the first and principal rites of every-day life. We also possess several volumes of the words of Buddha, consecrated to the great and indivisible Divine Being, and to all things that have come from his hands."

"Is there anything relating to the prophet Issa among these books?" I asked.

"No, sahib," returned the monk. "We have nothing but a few of the principal treatises relative to the observance of religious rites. As to the biographies of our saints, they are preserved at Lassa, and even some of the larger convents have not yet had time to procure copies of them.

Before coming here I lived many years in a large monastery at the other extremity of the Ladak, where I saw thousands of volumes and rolls of parchment copied at divers periods by the lamas of that place."

In the course of further conversation I learned that the convent in question was situated near Leh. My persistent inquiries, however, unfortunately aroused suspicion in the minds of the lamas, and it was with evident relief, on their part, that I was finally guided back to the inn; when, after a light supper, I soon fell into a sound sleep, leaving instructions to my Hindoo servant to cautiously ascertain — from the young lamas — the name of the convent in which their chief had lived before his appointment to Lamayure.

At daybreak I continued my journey, and, to my disappointment, learned from my servant that his efforts to gain information from the lamas had proved unsuccessful, as they were evidently on their guard.

I shall not pause here to speak of the convent life of these monks, for it is the same in all cloisters of the Ladak. I afterward visited the celebrated monastery of Leh, which I shall describe, in due time, giving full particulars concerning the curious existence led by the monks.

A steep declivity, running through a narrow gloomy defile that leads toward the Indus, begins at Lamayure.

Totally unconscious of the dangers lurking in the descent, I sent my carriers onward and encountered a passably good road stretching between two cliffs of brown argil. Soon, however, the path seemed to enter a narrow, obscure, subterranean passage, winding like a cornice along the rugged mountain side, above a precipice of frightful depth. A horseman, coming from the opposite direction, would assuredly have found it impossible to pass me on this overhanging shelf. Words are inadequate to describe the wild majestic beauty of this gorge, whose ridges tower loftily toward the heavens, lifting their crests proudly above the dark chasm beneath.

At some points the passage became so narrow that I could touch the opposite rocks with the tip of my cane from the saddle, while at times it seemed as if death was inevitable at every step. But it was now too late to alight from my horse, although I had never dreamed that I should soon find occasion to regret my foolish imprudence in entering this gorge alone. This passage, in fact, is nothing more than an enormous crevice formed by a powerful earthquake, which must have forcibly separated two gigantic masses of granite

rocks. In the very depth of the defile is an impetuous torrent, whose loud roar fills the gorge with a mysterious murmur, though it seems but an almost invisible white thread; while above the traveler glimmers a narrow, winding, blue streak, which is the only part of the celestial arch revealed between the towering rocks. This majestic glimpse of nature inspired the most exquisite pleasure and delight, but the severe tranquillity, the frightful hush of the mountains, and the melancholy murmur of the torrent whose waters dashed against the granite rocks, filled me with unconquerable anguish. For a distance of nearly eight miles we were thus swayed between these sweet and painful sensations; then, after an abrupt turn to the right, our troop emerged into a small valley encircled with granite cliffs whose peaks are reflected in the Indus, and on the banks of which is found the small fortress of Khalsi. This celebrated fortress dates back to the time of the Mussulman invasions, and the only route from Kashmir to Thibet passes through it.

Having crossed the Indus on a semi-suspension bridge leading to the door of the fortress, which it is impossible to evade, I traversed the valley and the village of Khalsi, directing my steps toward the hamlet of Snourly, which is situated along the stream and built on terraces bordering

the Indus, intending to spend the night there. The next two days I traveled quietly, and without encountering any difficulties, along the banks of the Indus, through a picturesque country that led me toward Leh, the capital of the Ladak.

Through the small valley of Saspoula, and over a territory of several kilometers surrounding the village of the same name, we saw a number of t'hortènes and shrines, and also two convents, over one of which floated the French flag. I afterward learned that a French engineer had made a present of it to the monks, who used it for decorative purposes.

I spent the night at Saspoula, and did not fail to visit the convent, the reader may rest assured. There, for the tenth time, I saw the eternal and dusty idols of Buddha, banners and flags piled into a corner, ugly masks littered over the floor, books and rolls of paper scattered in disorder, and a numberless quantity of prayer-wheels. The lamas take particular pleasure in making this exhibition, displaying the treasures of their convents with great pomp and pride, without in the least heeding the indifference or lack of interest natural to a stranger. "Everything must be shown, in the hope that the mere sight of these sacred objects may force the traveler to believe in the divine grandeur of the human soul."

As to the prophet Issa, they only repeated what I already knew — that the books which could give me any information concerning him were to be found at Lassa, and that the larger monasteries only possessed a few copies of them. I now abandoned all thought of going through the Karakorum, and determined to find the history of the prophet Issa, which would, perhaps, place the private life of the best of men under a new light and complete the vague accounts given of him in the New Testament.

At a short distance from Leh, and at the opening of the valley bearing the same name, the road stops short near an isolated rock, on the top of which stands a fort flanked with two towers and without garrison, and a small convent called Pitak. A mountain ten thousand five hundred feet in height protects the entrance of Thibet. The road then turns abruptly to the north in the direction of Leh, which is situated at an altitude of eleven thousand five hundred feet, six miles from Pitak, and at the base of immense granitic columns, with pinnacles enshrouded in eternal snows rising to an elevation of eighteen thousand to nineteen thousand feet. The city itself is encircled by a belt of stunted aspen-trees, and is elevated on successive terraces, dominated by an old fort and the palace of the ancient sovereigns

of the Ladak. At twilight I reached Leh, and descended into a bungalow especially constructed for Europeans who come over the Indian route in the hunting season

THE LADAK.

THE Ladak formerly made part of Great Thibet. But the frequent invasions of northern nations, who traversed this country in attempting to conquer Kashmir, and the many wars of which it was the scene of action, not only reduced it to misery, but also resulted in its separation from the political domination of Lassa by its passing from the hands of one conqueror to those of another. The Mohammedans, who took possession of Kashmir and the Ladak at an early period, forcibly converted the weak inhabitants of Little Thibet to Islamism. The political existence of the Ladak ended with the annexation of that country to Kashmir by the Sikhs, when the people were permitted to again practice their ancient religion. Two-thirds of the inhabitants took advantage of this freedom to reconstruct their gonpas and resumed their former life; the Baltistans alone remaining Schiit-Mussulmans, a sect to which the conquerors of the country had belonged. Notwithstanding this, however, they have retained but a very vague tinge of Islamism;

the character of which is revealed mostly in their customs and the polygamy they practice. The lamas declare that they do not yet despair of bringing them back to the faith of their ancestors.

In regard to religion the Ladak is dependent on Lassa, the capital of Thibet and the residence of the Dalaï-Lama; it is at Lassa also that the principal Khutuktus, or supreme lamas, and the Chogzots, or managers, are elected. Politically it is under the authority of the Maharaja of Kashmir, who appoints the governor.

The population of the Ladak is essentially Mongolian, but is divided into Ladakians and Tchampas. They lead a sedentary life, build villages along the narrow valleys, dwell in neat two-story houses, and cultivate a few patches of land. They are excessively ill-favored, being of small stature, hollow-cheeked, and round-shouldered, with a small head, narrow receding forehead, the bright dark eyes of the Mongolian race, a flat nose, a large mouth and thin lips, and a short chin, adorned with a sparse beard, in which ends the net of wrinkles that furrow the two hollow cheeks. Such is the Ladakian. To this add a shaven head, from which hangs a very slender braid of hair, and you have not only the general type of the inhabitants of Ladak, but of the entire Thibet.

The women are also of small stature, and possess prominent cheek-bones; but they are of more robust constitution and the roses bloom in their cheeks, while a sympathetic smile continually hovers about their lips. They are gentle in disposition and exceedingly gay, being very fond of laughter.

The severity of the climate and the rugged nature of the country deprive the people of rich clothing of varied colors. Their shirts are of common unbleached linen and of rough cloth of home manufacture; while their trousers, of the same material, are made to reach the knee. Men of means add a choga (coat) to this. A fur cap, with earlaps, is worn in the winter; while a cloth cap with a side flap does duty in the summer. A whole arsenal of small objects hang from their belts; among which may be found a case of needles, a knife, a pen and inkstand, a tobacco pouch, and the inevitable prayer-wheel.

Male Thibetans, as a rule, are so intensely indolent, that when their hair becomes loosened, it remains unbraided for three months; and once they have put on a shirt, it is worn until it falls in tatters from their bodies. Their coats are always dirty, and invariably bear the stamp of their braid of hair, which they never forget to grease carefully every day. They wash their

faces once a year; not of their own free will, but because constrained by the law. The stench they spread around them is, in fact, so intense that strangers approach them only when absolutely necessary.

The women, on the contrary, are exceedingly fond of order and cleanliness; bathing constantly every day, and upon any excuse. A red gown is worn over their dazzling white and well-molded shoulders, confined below the waist within narrow red and green pantaloons, over which falls a wide cloth skirt elaborately plaited. A pair of red shoes, embroidered and lined with fur, completes this house costume. The hair is worn in a thin braid, to which is pinned a large piece of loose cloth somewhat resembling the Italian headdress; beneath this peculiar veil is suspended a variety of bright colored pebbles, coins, and fragments of carved metals; the ears are covered with two tongues of cloth or fur; and a lined lamb-skin is worn over the shoulders, barely covering the back. While the poor are satisfied with a plain fur skin, for outdoor wear, the women of wealth wear a veritable pelisse, trimmed with red cloth and gold fringe.

Whether merely strolling through the streets or calling on their neighbors, these women invariably carry on their backs a basket of conical

shape, in which they gather their fuel from the dunghills. Every woman possesses money of her own, which she invariably spends on trinkets; usually buying large pieces of turquoise, which are cheap enough, and adding them to the odd ornaments of her head-dress. I have seen stones of this kind that weighed fully five pounds.

The Ladakian woman holds a social position envied by all her Oriental sisters, for she is free and respected; and, save for the few hours of light work she does in the fields, spends nearly all her time in exchanging neighborly visits, although it must be here remarked that "gossiping" is unknown.

Agriculture is the general occupation of the fixed population of the Ladak; but the inhabitants possess so little land — the portion of each being about ten acres — that the income derived therefrom barely suffices for the mere necessaries of life, leaving nothing toward the payment of taxes. Trades are generally despised; and laborers and musicians, who compose the lowest degree of society, are known under the contemptuous name of Bem, and universally shunned. The hours of leisure left, after their work in the fields is accomplished, is spent in hunting the Thibet goat, whose fur is greatly valued in India; while the poorer inhabitants, who can not afford the

necessary weapons, hire themselves as coolies. This sport is also engaged in by women, whose powers of endurance are remarkable, and who really bear the hardships encountered in the chase much better than their husbands, the latter being so intensely lazy that they are quite capable of spending the whole night out of doors, lying on a stone, indifferent alike to heat and cold.

Polyandry (a subject which later on I shall return to more in detail) has the effect of uniting the people more closely, by forming large families who till their land in common, with their yaks, zos, and zomos (oxen and cows). No member of a family can at any time leave it; and when one dies, his share reverts to the community.

Wheat is the principal crop, but, owing to the harshness of the climate, the grain is exceedingly small. Barley is also cultivated, and is pulverized before being sold. When the harvest is over, the men repair to the mountains to gather a wild plant called "Enoriota" and a species of tall thistle, or "dama," which are used for fuel, wood being extremely scarce in the Ladak. Forests and gardens are unknown, and it is only at rare intervals that sickly clumps of poplars and willows are found on the banks of the streams. A few aspens may also be sometimes seen near the villages; but for lack of fertile soil gardening can not thrive.

The scarcity of wood is particularly noticeable in the buildings, which are constructed of sun-dried bricks, or of medium-sized stones, cemented together with a sort of mortar composed of argil and chopped straw.

The houses of the sedentary Ladakians consist of two stories, with carefully white-washed walls and brightly-painted windows, the horizontal roofs forming terraces which are decked with wild flowers, and where, during the fine season, the inmates kill time contemplating nature and keeping their prayer-wheels in motion. Each of these dwellings contains several rooms, all furnished with a bed and other articles of furniture, save one, which is reserved for visitors and hung with the most beautiful skins. In the homes of the wealthier class, there is also an apartment specially devoted to prayer and filled with idols.

A most regular existence is led here. Everything is eaten without much choice, but the principal food is of the plainest kind. Breakfast consists of a morsel of rye bread; while at noon a bowl of flour is placed on the table, warm water poured into it, and the whole stirred with small sticks until it attains the consistency of a thick batter, which is then rolled into small balls and eaten with milk; for supper, bread and tea are served. Meat is a superfluous luxury, little

used save by hunters who introduce a certain degree of variety in their meals by eating the flesh of wild goats, eagles, or white pheasants, which are quite plentiful in this country.

A great quantity of tchang, a sort of pale unfermented beer, is drunk all day long.

Should a Ladakian leave home, in search of work in a neighboring village, on a pony — and these privileged beings are few indeed — he invariably provides himself with a small quantity of flour for the journey. The dinner hour having arrived, he seeks a river or spring, mixes a little flour and water together in a wooden cup which he always carries, and sits quietly down to enjoy his meal.

The Tchampas, or nomads, who compose the other portion of the population of the Ladak, are much poorer and coarser than the sedentary Ladakians. They are mostly hunters, and neglect agriculture completely. Although professing the Buddhist religion, they never enter a monastery unless in need of flour, which they obtain in exchange for game; and their favorite dwelling place is a tent on the summit of the mountains, where the cold is excessive. While the Ladakians, properly speaking, are anxious to gain knowledge, proverbially indolent and truthful, the Tchampas, on the contrary, are irritable, extremely active, inveterate liars, and profess

utter contempt for convents. Dwelling among them is the little colony of the Khomba, a bohemian set of people who came from the vicinity of Lassa, and lead a miserable existence as mendicants. Incapable of work, and speaking a tongue not understood in the country in which they beg their bread, they are objects of universal scorn, being tolerated only through compassion for their deplorable condition when starvation drives them in numbers into the villages.

Polyandry, which is practiced in all families, deeply aroused my curiosity. It is by no means a consequence attending the doctrines of Buddhism, for this custom existed long before the appearance of Buddha. It has assumed enormous proportions in India, where it constitutes one of the most active means of checking a population that ever tends to increase; and even at the present day, the practice of killing female children at birth makes terrible ravages in that country; all efforts on the part of the English having proved fruitless in their struggle against the suppression of future mothers. Manou himself made polyandry a law, and Buddhist preachers, who had abjured Brahmanism and advocated the use of opium, imported the custom into the island of Ceylon, Thibet, Mongolia, and Korea. Though long suppressed in China, polyandry, whose

stronghold is in Thibet and Ceylon, also flourishes among the Kalmuks, between Todas in Southern India, and Nairs on the Malabar Coast. Traces of this odd marriage constitution are also found among the Tasmanians, and in North America among the Iroquois.

Furthermore, polyandry has even flourished in Europe, if we are to believe Cæsar, who says in his "De Bello Gallico." liv. V, page 17: "*Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes, et maximè fratres cum fratribus et parentes cum liberis.*"

All this proves conclusively that it is impossible to look upon polyandry as a religious custom. In Thibet, it may be explained by motives of an economic order, if we take into consideration the average quantity of tillable land falling to each of its inhabitants. To maintain a population of one million five hundred thousand on a surface of one million two hundred thousand square kilometers, the Buddhists were forced to adopt polyandry, while each family is moreover obliged to furnish one member to a religious order. The first-born son is pledged to a gonpa, which is invariably found on one of the heights near each village. When the child has attained the age of eight years, he is intrusted to a caravan on its way to Lassa, where he enters one of the convents and remains

until the age of fifteen as a novice. There he learns to read and write, and studies the religious rites and the sacred parchments written in the Pali tongue, the language formerly spoken in the Maguada Country, where, according to tradition, Buddha Gautama was born.

The elder brother chooses a wife who becomes the common property of every member of his family. The choice of the bride and the nuptial ceremony are both accomplished in the most primitive way. When a woman and her several husbands decide upon the marriage of one of their sons, the elder brother is sent to pay a visit to a neighbor with a marriageable daughter.

The first and second visits are spent in commonplace conversation, intermingled with frequent libations of tchang; and it is only on the occasion of his third visit that the young man announces his intention of taking upon himself a wife. The young girl, who is not unknown to the prospective groom, since the women of Ladak never veil their faces, is then brought forward.

A young girl can not be married without her consent; but if she accepts the proposal, the young man takes her with him to his home, where she becomes his wife and that of his brothers. A family with but one son, sends him to a woman who has two or three husbands only,

and he offers himself in the role of third or fourth husband. This offer is not usually declined, and the young man immediately takes his place in the bosom of his new family.

Children are sometimes also married at a very tender age; but they always remain in their respective families until they have attained, or even passed, a marriageable age. Should a young girl give birth to a child before marriage, she is not only shielded from public scorn, but is, on the contrary, surrounded with every mark of the greatest respect; for she is prolific, and a host of men rival the favor of her hand. A woman has the right to have an unlimited number of husbands or lovers. In the latter case, she invites the young man of her choice into her home, and quietly announces that she has taken a new lover "jing-tuh;" a piece of information received with perfect equanimity on the part of the discarded husbands, and even with joy when the wife of their bosoms has proved barren in the first three years of her marriage.

Jealousy is unknown. The Thibetan is of too cold a temperament to understand love; which, for him, would almost seem an anachronism, even if it were not a flagrant violation of the custom which makes women common to all; in a word,

to his eyes, love would appear a luxury that nothing could justify.

In the absence of one of the husbands, his place is offered to a bachelor or a widower—although the latter are in great minority, the wife usually surviving her debilitated husbands—or a Buddhist traveler, whose business may retain him for some time in the village, is sometimes chosen instead. A married man who travels, or finds himself in a neighboring town in search of work, always takes advantage of the hospitality of his co-religionists, who place their own wives at his disposal as well as their roofs; and in case a woman has remained sterile, the husbands are really importunate in their offers, hoping thereby to become fathers.

Notwithstanding her peculiar position, the woman is entirely free in the choice of a husband or lover; she enjoys the esteem and respect of all, is always cheerful, takes part in everything that is discussed, and goes unimpeded wherever she pleases, save in the principal chamber of prayers in the monastery, the entrance of which is formally interdicted to her.

The children recognize their mother only, and feel no affection for their fathers for the excellent reason that they possess an infinity of them. Although I do not approve of polyandry, I can

scarcely condemn its practice in Thibet. Were it not for it, the population would increase prodigiously; famines and misery would spread over the whole nation with their entire sinister train,—murder, theft, etc., crimes which are yet absolutely unknown in that entire country.

A FEAST IN A GONPA.

LEH, the capital of the Ladak, is a small town of five thousand inhabitants, with two or three streets bordered with neat white houses, and a market square, or bazaar, where the merchants of India, China, Turkestan, Kashmir, and Thibet come to exchange their products for Thibetan gold, brought by the natives, for the purchase of cloth garments for their monks, as well as for many articles of absolute necessity for themselves.

An old deserted palace stands on one of the hills that rises above the town; while in the very center of the town is a vast two-story building, in which resides the Governor of the Ladak, the Surajbal Vizier—a most intelligent and able ruler, who obtained his degree of philosophy in London.

To celebrate my visit in Leh, the Governor organized a polo game on the square—this game, introduced by the English, having become the national game of the Thibetans—ending the evening with a round of dances and games in

front of his own terrace. A number of bonfires threw their red glares over the crowd of spectators who formed a circle around a group of personages disguised as animals, devils, and witches; leaping, skipping, and twirling, and executing strange dances measured by the monotonous music of two straight trumpets, accompanied by a drum. The infernal racket produced by these instruments, added to the continual hue and cry of the crowd, wearied me so intensely that it finally became well-nigh unendurable.

The ceremony terminated with the graceful dances of the women, who twirled on their heels, swayed to and fro, courtesied beneath our windows, and gaily jingled their bracelets of ivory and brass by crossing their hands near the wrists.

I rose early the following morning and started in the direction of a large convent called Ifimis, which stands on a most picturesque site at the summit of a high rock rising in the middle of a valley that dominates the Indus. It is one of the principal monasteries of the country, and is supported by gifts from the inhabitants and subsidies sent from Lassa. On the road to the convent, after having crossed the Indus and a number of small villages, we found innumerable shrines with stones covered with inscriptions, as well as many t'hortènes which our guides carefully

passed on the right side. Once I tried to turn my horse to the left, but the Ladakians made me turn back, leading my steed by the bridle, and explaining that it was customary to turn to the right. I found it impossible, however, to learn the origin of this custom.

We wended our way on foot toward the gonpa, which is surmounted by an embattled tower visible from afar, and soon found ourselves before a large, brightly-painted door, forming part of a vast building inclosing a graveled court. To the right, in one of the angles, is a large painted door adorned with big brass rings. This is the entrance to the principal temple, which is decorated with paintings of the chief idols and an immense statue of Buddha surrounded by a multitude of sacred statuettes. To the left is a verandah ornamented with a huge prayer-wheel, around which the lamas were gathered in a circle. Below and directly beneath this verandah were a few musicians with long trumpets and drums in their hands.

To the right of the court is a row of doors giving access to the rooms occupied by the monks, all decorated with sacred paintings and prayer-wheels, the latter surmounted by black and red tridents with floating ribbons covered with inscriptions.

In the center of the court are two tall poles, from the tips of which float yak-tails and narrow paper streamers bearing religious precepts. Along the walls of the convent are more prayer-wheels ornamented with ribbons.

A profound silence reigned in the court; all were anxiously awaiting the representation of a religious mystery about to begin. We took our places on the verandah, not far from the lamas, and almost immediately the musicians intoned a soft monotonous melody on their trumpets, to the accompaniment of a queer looking drum supported on a stick planted into the ground.

At the first notes of the melancholy chant that accompanied this fantastic music, the doors along the convent wall opened to admit a procession of a score of personages disguised as animals, birds, devils, and inconceivable monsters. On their breasts were fantastic dragons, demons, and skulls, embroidered in Chinese silk of different hues. Their head-dress consisted of a conical-shaped hat, with long multi-colored ribbons falling over the breast and elaborately inscribed; while over the face was worn a mask representing a skull, embroidered in white silk. Thus appareled, they slowly circled around the tall poles standing in the middle of the court, waving their arms and brandishing from their left hands

a peculiar sort of spoon made of the fragment of a human skull bound with a piece of ribbon, to which was attached a tuft of hair torn — it was claimed — from the scalps of their enemies. Their promenade around the poles soon developed into a sort of wild dance, which was brought to a sudden stop by a more emphasized bang on the drum, only to recommence a moment later, the dancers now wielding yellow sticks decked with ribbons, which they held in a menacing attitude in their right hands. They then advanced and saluted the chief lama, after which they stationed themselves near the door leading to the temple.

At this same moment other personages, with heads incased in brass masks, emerged from the principal doors of the temple. They were clothed in embroidered robes of different hues and carried a small tambourine in one hand, while with the other they jingled a string of small bells. A drum-stick hung against each tambourine, and the slightest movement of the hand brought it in contact with the sonorous vellum, producing a strange sound. These new dancers marched around the court several times, accompanying their steps with a soft beating of the tambourines. After each round there was a pause, then a terrible din, produced by a tremendous beating of the tambourines in unison, after which all ran toward

the main entrance, where they ranged themselves on the stairway.

An instant of complete silence followed, at the end of which we saw a third group of disguised men emerge from the temple, their enormous masks representing different deities and bearing a third eye on their foreheads.

Marching at the head was Thlogan-Poudma-Jungnas, signifying "born in the lotus flower." He was accompanied by another masked personage, richly dressed and carrying a large yellow parasol covered with drawings. His suite was composed of gods in magnificent costume: Dorje-Trolong, Sangspa-Kourpo (Brahma), and others. These masks, as the lama nearest to us explained, represented six classes of beings subject to metamorphosis-gods, demi-gods, men, animals, spirits, and demons.

On each side of these personages, advancing so gravely, walked other masked men in silk garments of dazzling colors, with tessellated gold crown bordered with six gems and surmounted by a long arrow, and each carrying a drum.

In this order and amid the din of clashing, incoherent music, they marched thrice around the tall poles, then sat on the ground in a circle about Thlogan-Poudma-Jungnas, the three-eyed-god, who gravely stuck two fingers in his mouth and

emitted a shrill whistle. In response to this signal a band of young men in warrior's dress rushed out of the temple; they wore short shirts, with strings of sleigh-bells dangling around their limbs and tied with ribbons that fluttered in the breeze, while their heads were concealed beneath monstrous green masks, over which floated triangular red banners. With a diabolical din of tambourines and bells they began a whirling, dizzying dance around the gods that were seated on the ground, while two tall fellows in clownish tights executed a series of grotesque leaps and contortions that threw the spectators into spasms of laughter.

A new group, whose disguise consisted of red miters and yellow pantaloons, came out of the temple with bells and tambourines and took up the space opposite the gods, this representing the greatest power next to divinity.

Then more red and brown masked figures with three eyes painted on their breasts appeared on the scene. Two rows of dancers were now formed and a general dance followed, the masked men marching forward and backward, turning in a circle here and forming into columns there, only pausing long enough now and then to bow to the audience and form into new figures.

This monotonous performance finally came to

an end, and gods, demi-gods, kings, men, and spirits rose, and, followed by the masked forms, solemnly marched toward the principal door of the temple, from which came another group disguised as skeletons. Each of these movements had its particular signification and was carefully calculated beforehand. The advancing throng paused and made way for this procession of skeletons, who gravely, and with measured steps, marched to the tall poles, where they stopped and shook the wooden clappers that hung to their sides, producing a noise resembling the snapping of the jaws. They then walked twice around the court, keeping step to the music of the tambourines, and finally intoned a religious chant. After more snapping of their artificial jaws and grinding of teeth — imitated to perfection — they executed a few difficult feats, in which the contortions were really painful to witness, and came to a rest at last.

The image of the "enemy of men," made of dough and placed at the foot of one of the poles, was then seized upon and broken, and the pieces distributed among the skeletons by the old men who stood among the spectators, this signifying — so it seems — that they were holding themselves in readiness to soon join them in the cemetery.

The chief lama now approached me and exten-

ded a polite invitation to accompany him to the principal terrace and drink the tchang of the feast, an offer which I accepted with pleasure, the performance I had just witnessed having made me rather dizzy.

Having crossed the court and ascended a stairway encumbered by prayer-wheels, we passed through two rooms, in which were numberless images of gods, and stepped out on the terrace, where I seated myself on a bench facing the venerable lama, whose eyes sparkled with intelligence.

Three lamas immediately brought jugs of tchang, which they poured into small brass cups, serving the chief lama first, then myself and servants.

"Did you enjoy our little celebration?" inquired the lama.

"It was very fine," I answered, "and I have not yet been able to shake off the impression made on me by the spectacle I have just witnessed. But, I must admit, that I never imagined for a moment that Buddhism could surround its religious ceremonies with so gaudy, not to say clamorous, exterior forms."

"There is no religion in which the ceremonies assume a more theatrical form," returned the lama. "It is a ritual part of the service which

in no way violates the fundamental principles of Buddhism, being merely a practical means of maintaining the ignorant throng in the obedience and love of the Creator, as a toy may keep a child under the submission of his parents. The people, or the ignorant throng, are the children of the Father."

"But what is the meaning of all those masks, costumes, bells, dances, and, in a general way, of this entire performance, which seems to be executed from a fixed programme?" I asked.

"We have many such feasts in the year," replied the lama, "and we invite outsiders to represent the mysteries, which bear a strong analogy to pantomimes, and in which each actor may execute almost any figure or movement he chooses, provided he conforms himself to the circumstances and keeps the main idea in view. Our mysteries are nothing more than pantomimes, which should represent the gods as enjoying universal veneration; a veneration that should be rewarded by that cheerfulness of soul which comes from the simultaneous knowledge of inevitable death and of a future existence. The actors wear garments belonging to the gonpa, and act according to general instructions, which leave them full freedom of gesture. The effect produced is undoubtedly magnificent, but the

spectators must guess the signification of each part for themselves. You sometimes also have recourse to this expedient, which in no way affects the principle of monotheism itself."

"Excuse my interruption," I broke in, "but that mass of idols which encumbers your gonpas is certainly a gross violation of this principle!"

"As I have already said," explained the lama, "man is, and always will be, in his infancy. He understands, sees, and feels the grandeur of nature, but he neither sees nor understands the great spirit which has created and animated all things. Man has always sought tangible things, it being impossible for him to believe long in what escapes his material senses. He has racked his brains to find the means of contemplating the Creator, trying to enter into direct relations with the Supreme Being who has given him so many blessings, and, as he erroneously believes, many unnecessary trials too. This explains why he began to worship those parts of nature from which he received benefits. We see a striking example of this in the ancient Egyptians, who worshiped animals, trees, and stones, winds and tempests. Other nations, steeped more deeply in ignorance, seeing that the results of winds were not always favorable, that rain was not infallible in producing good crops, and that animals fre-

quently disobeyed the will of man, sought a direct intermediary between themselves and the great unfathomable and mysterious power of the Creator. Thus they created idols, which they regarded as neutral to all their surroundings, and to whose mediation they always had recourse. From the remotest periods to the present day, man has never known any tendency but toward tangible reality. In seeking a path that might lead them to the feet of the Creator, the Assyrians turned their gaze toward the planets, which they contemplated but could not reach. This belief the Guebers retain to this day. In their nullity and blindness of mind, men are incapable of conceiving the invisible and spiritual link that unites them to the great Divinity, which explains why they have sought palpable things existing within the domain of the senses; thus aiming an attenuating blow at the divine principle. However, they have never dared attribute a divine and eternal existence to the visible images which are their own hand-work. The same fact may be observed in Brahmanism, where men, who have been left to their inclination in regard to exterior forms, have gradually — and not in one day — created an army of gods and demi-gods. The Israelites have probably demonstrated in the most con-

clusive manner the inherent love of man for all that is concrete; notwithstanding a series of dazzling miracles performed by the great Creator, who is the same for all nations, the people of Israel could not help setting up a god cast in metal, at the very moment when their prophet Mossa was conversing with the Creator!

"Buddhism has undergone the same modifications. Our great reformer, Cakya-Mouni, who was inspired by the Supreme Judge, truly understood the one and indivisible majesty of Brahma, and did all in his power to prevent the manufacture of images, made, it was claimed, in his resemblance; he openly separated himself from the polytheistic Brahmans and preached the purity and immortality of Brahma. The success obtained by himself and his disciples among the people caused him to be persecuted by the Brahmans, who had acquired a source of personal revenue in creating new gods, and who, contrary to the law of God, treated the nation despotically. Our first sacred preachers, whom we call Buddhas, which means learned and saintly, because the Great Creator incarnated himself in them, dwelt in different parts of the world. As their sermons were mainly directed against the tyranny of the Brahmans and their profitable business in propagating this idea of God, the Buddhists — that is

those who have followed the doctrine of these holy preachers — were mostly gathered from the lower classes of China and India. Among these sacred preachers, the Buddha, Cakya-Mouni, known in China under the name of Fô, who lived three thousand years ago and whose sermons brought the whole of China back into the path of the true God, and the Buddha Gautama, who lived two thousand five-hundred years ago and converted nearly half of the Hindoos to the word of the only invisible and impersonal God, are particularly venerated.

"Buddhism is divided into many sects, which differ only in some of the religious ceremonies, the basis of the doctrine being the same in all. The Thibetan Buddhists, whom we call Lamaists, separated from the Foists fifteen hundred years ago. Until then we had formed part of the worshipers of the Buddha Fô Cakya-Mouni, who was the first to unite all the laws enacted by the different Buddhas at the time of the great schism among the Brahmans. Later, a Mongolian, Khutuktus, translated the works of the great Buddha into Chinese, for which the Emperor of China rewarded him with the title of Go-Chi — King's preceptor. After his death this title was bestowed on the Dalaï-Lama of Thibet, and since that epoch the incumbent of this post has enjoyed the

dignified name of Go-Chi—in fact, our religion itself is called Lamaism (Superior). Red monks and yellow monks are admitted. The former marry and recognize the authority of the Bantsin, who resides at Techow-Lumba and is chief of the civil administration of Thibet; we yellow lamas take vows of celibacy, and our direct chief is the Dalaï-Lama. This constitutes the difference between these two religious orders, whose ritual is identical."

"Do they all organize such mysteries as I have just witnessed?"

"Yes, with few exceptions. These feasts were formerly celebrated with solemn pomp, but our gonpas have been repeatedly pillaged and our riches stolen since the conquest of the Ladak, and we must now be satisfied with white garments and bronze utensils, while in Thibet nothing is seen but gold embroidery and gold vessels."

"In a recent visit to one of your gonpas a lama spoke to me of a prophet, or, as you perhaps call him, a Buddha of the name of Issa. Can you tell me anything of him?" I asked, grasping the first favorable opportunity of broaching the subject that was of paramount interest to me.

"The name of Issa is greatly respected among the Buddhists," was the reply, "though little is known of him save by the chief lamas who have

read the parchments relating to his life. We have an unlimited number of Buddhas, such as Issa, and the eighty-four thousand rolls of parchment in existence are replete with details of them all; but few men have read the one-hundredth part of these records. In conformity with an established custom, no pupil or lama who visits Lassa fails to present one or several copies of these to the convent to which he belongs; our gonpa, being among the fortunate ones, already possesses a large number of manuscripts, which I read in my leisure hours. Among these copies I have found descriptions of the life and deeds of Issa, who preached in India and among the sons of Israel, and who was afterward put to death by pagans whose descendants adopted the doctrine he taught, the doctrine in which you believe. The Great Buddha, soul of the universe, is the incarnation of Brahma; he remains inert nearly always, containing all things within him since the origin of man, and his breath animates the world. He abandoned man to his own strength; yet, at certain epochs, he emerges from his inaction and assumes a human form, that he may attempt to snatch his creatures from irremediable ruin. In the course of his terrestrial existence, Buddha creates a new world in the midst of the people who have gone astray, then

leaves this earth to again become an invisible being and resume his life of perfect felicity.

"Three thousand years ago the Great Buddha incarnated himself in the person of the celebrated prince, Cakya-Mouni, by maintaining and propagating the doctrines of his twenty incarnations. Two thousand five hundred years ago the great soul of the world incarnated himself once more in Gautama, building the foundations of a new world in Burma, Siam, and different islands. Shortly afterward, thanks to the perseverance of the wise men who applied themselves to the propagation of the holy doctrine, Buddhism began to penetrate into China; and about the year 2050, under Ming-Ti, of the Honi dynasty, the doctrine of Cakya-Mouni was finally adopted by the people. Simultaneously with the apparition of Buddhism in China, the doctrine began to spread among the Israelites. And about two thousand years ago the perfect Being, arousing again from his inaction for a period, incarnated himself into the newborn child of a poor family; he willed that infant lips, by employing popular images, might enlighten unfortunate humanity on the life beyond the grave, and, by his own example, bring back men to the true way and into the path that might best lead them to original moral purity. When the sacred child had attained a certain age, he was

taken to India, where, until he attained manhood, he studied the laws of the Great Buddha who resides eternally in heaven."

"In what tongue are written the principal rolls relative to the life of Issa?" I asked, rising, for my interesting companion was beginning to show signs of fatigue, and had set a small prayer-wheel in motion to put an end to the conversation.

"The rolls which treat of the life of Issa, and which were brought from India to Nepal, and from Nepal to Thibet, are written in the Pali tongue, and are now at Lassa; but we possess one copy in our own tongue; that is in the Thibetan language."

"How is Issa looked upon in Thibet? Does he bear the reputation of a saint?"

"The people ignore his very existence; the great lamas, who have studied the parchments relating to his life, alone know of him. But as his doctrine does not constitute a canonical part of Buddhism, and the worshipers of Issa do not acknowledge the authority of the Dalaï-Lama, this prophet — like many of his kind — is not recognized as one of the principal saints in Thibet."

"Would you be committing a sin, if you were to read these copies to a stranger?" I queried.

"What belongs to God," he replied, "belongs

also to men. It is our duty to cheerfully assist in the propagation of his doctrine; but I do not know where these papers are to be found. Should you ever again visit our gonpa, however, I will show them to you with pleasure."

We were interrupted at this juncture by the entrance of two monks, who said a few words — unintelligible to me — and hastily retired.

"I am summoned to attend the sacrifices. Pray excuse me," said the lama, with a bow, as he moved toward the door.

Nothing remained for me to do but to retire to the chamber allotted to my use; where I sought my bed, after partaking of food and milk, and slept soundly till morning.

The next night I was back at Leh, racking my brains to invent a pretext to again visit the convent.

Two days later I dispatched a messenger with an alarm clock, a watch, and a thermometer, as gifts to the chief lama, with the information that, before leaving the Ladak, I would probably return to the convent, in the hope that he would not refuse to let me see the book which had formed the subject of our conversation.

My intention was to go to Kashmir, and return to Himis sometime later, but fate decided otherwise. While passing along the foot of the

mountain, on which is perched the gonpa Piatak, my horse stumbled, throwing me violently to the ground and breaking my leg above the knee. It was now impossible to continue my journey; and as I had no desire to return to Leh, and the prospect of begging the hospitality of the gonpa, which is a mere hovel, was anything but enchanting, I ordered my servants to take me to Himis, which was only a half-day's journey. After much intense suffering, my leg was finally bandaged, and I was hoisted into the saddle. With one man supporting my injured limb and another leading my horse by the bridle, we started slowly back, reaching Himis at a late hour of the night.

On hearing of the accident that had befallen me, the monks immediately rushed out to receive me. With infinite precautions I was borne to their best chamber and deposited on a mountain of soft bedding, with a prayer-wheel placed at my side. All this was done under the direct supervision of their chief, who affectionately pressed my hand when I stretched it out to thank him for his kindness.

The succeeding morning I incased the injured member in thin boards held together with strings, and did my best to remain motionless. A favorable result was soon apparent, and two days later I was well enough to undertake a slow journey toward India, in quest of a physician.

While a young man kept the prayer-wheel in motion by my bedside, the venerable director of the gonpa entertained me with interesting accounts of their belief and the country in general, meanwhile frequently pulling out the watch and alarm clock, and interrupting his discourse to question me in regard to their use and the manner of winding them both. Finally, yielding to my earnest solicitations, he brought forth two big volumes in cardboard covers, with leaves yellowed by the lapse of time, and read the biography of Issa, which I carefully copied from the translation of my interpreter. This curious document is written in the form of isolated verses, which frequently bear no connection between each other.

On the third day my condition was favorable enough to permit me to continue my journey, and I again started for India by way of Kashmir. Twenty long days of excruciating suffering were spent on the way; but by means of a letter kindly sent me by Monsieur Peicheau, a Frenchman—whom I now take the opportunity of thanking for his courteous hospitality—and with an order from the grand-vizier of the Maharaja of Kashmir to the authorities to furnish me with bearers, I finally reached Serinagur, which I almost immediately left again as I was anxious to arrive in India before the first snowfall.

At Murree I met another kind Frenchman, Count André de Saint-Phall, who was taking a pleasure trip through Hindoostan. Throughout the whole journey we made together to Bombay, during which I suffered intolerable pain from my broken leg and the consequent fever, the young count showed himself full of the most tender solicitude for me. My heart is still filled with sincere gratitude toward him; and neither shall I ever forget the friendly attentions showered upon me on my arrival in Bombay by the Marquis de Mores, the Viscount de Breteuil, Monsieur Monod of the Comptoir d'Escompte, Monsieur Moet, consul, and all the Frenchmen of that sympathetic French colony.

I have long cherished the project of publishing the memoirs on the life of Jesus Christ, which I found at Himis, and of which I have already spoken; but affairs of all sorts have completely absorbed my time until this day. It is only after many sleepless nights spent in the classification of all my notes, after grouping the verses in conformity with the course of the narrative, and imprinting a character of unity to the entire work, that I now finally consent to give publication to the curious manuscript that follows.

THE LIFE OF SAINT ISSA.

THE BEST OF THE SONS OF MEN.

I.

1. The earth has trembled and the heavens have wept, because of the great crime just committed in the land of Israel.

2. For they have put to torture and executed the great just Issa, in whom dwelt the spirit of the world.

3. Which was incarnated in a simple mortal, that men might be benefited and evil thoughts exterminated thereby.

4. And that it might bring back to a life of peace, of love, and happiness, man degraded by sin, and recall to him the only and indivisible Creator whose mercy is boundless and infinite.

5. This is what is related on this subject by the merchants who have come from Israel.

II.

1. The people of Israel, who inhabited a most fertile land, yielding two crops a year, and who possessed immense flocks, excited the wrath of God through their sins.

2. And he inflicted upon them a terrible punishment by taking away their land, their flocks, and all they possessed; and Israel was reduced to slavery by the rich and powerful Pharaohs who then reigned in Egypt.

3. The latter treated the Israelites more cruelly than animals, loading them with chains and putting them to the roughest labor; they covered their bodies with bruises and wounds, and denied them food and shelter,

4. That they might be kept in a state of continual terror and robbed of all semblance of humanity;

5. And in their dire distress, the children of Israel, remembering their heavenly protector, addressed their prayers to him and implored his assistance and mercy.

6. An illustrious Pharaoh then reigned in Egypt, who had become celebrated for his numerous victories, the great riches he had amassed, and the vast palaces which his slaves had erected with their own hands.

7. This Pharaoh had two sons, the younger of whom was called Mossa; and the learned Israelites taught him divers sciences.

8. And Mossa was beloved throughout the land of Egypt for his goodness and the compassion he displayed for them that suffered.

9. Seeing that, notwithstanding the intolerable sufferings they endured, the Israelites refused to abandon their God to worship those created by the hands of man and which were the gods of the Egyptians.

10. Mossa believed in their indivisible God,

who did not allow their flagging strength to falter.

11. And the Israelite preceptors encouraged Mossa's ardor and had recourse to him, begging him to intercede with Pharaoh, his father, in favor of his co-religionists.

12. Prince Mossa pleaded with his father to soften the lot of these unhappy people, but Pharaoh became angry with him and only imposed more hardships upon his slaves.

13. It came to pass, not long after, that a great calamity fell upon Egypt; the plague decimated the young and the old, the strong and the sick; and Pharaoh believed he had incurred the wrath of his own gods against him;

14. But the prince Mossa declared to his father, that it was the God of his slaves who was interfering in favor of his unhappy people and punishing the Egyptians;

15. Pharaoh commanded Mossa, his son, to gather all the slaves of Jewish race, to lead them

away to a great distance from the capital and found another city, where he should remain with them.

16. Mossa announced to the Hebrew slaves that he had delivered them in the name of their God, the God of Israel; and he went with them out of the city and of the land of Egypt.

17. He therefore led them into the land they had lost through their many sins; he gave them laws and enjoined them to always pray to the invisible Creator whose goodness is infinite.

18. At the death of the prince Mossa, the Israelites rigorously observed his laws, and God recompensed them for the wrongs they had suffered in Egypt.

19. Their kingdom became the most powerful in all the world, their kings gained renown for their treasures, and a long period of peace prevailed among the children of Israel.

III.

1. The fame of the riches of Israel spread over

all the world, and the neighboring nations envied them.

2. But the victorious arms of the Hebrews were directed by the Most High himself, and the pagans dared not attack them.

3. Unhappily as man does not always obey even his own will, the fidelity of the Israelites to their God was not of long duration.

4. They began by forgetting all the favors he had showered upon them, invoked his name on rare occasions only, and begged protection of magicians and wizards;

5. The kings and rulers substituted their own laws for those that Mossa had prepared; the temple of God and the practice of religion were abandoned, the nation gave itself up to pleasures and lost its original purity.

6. Many centuries had elapsed since their departure from Egypt, when God again resolved to punish them.

7. Strangers began to invade the land of Israel,

devastating the fields, destroying the villages, and taking the inhabitants into captivity.

8. A throng of pagans came from over the sea, from the country of Romeles; they subjected the Hebrews, and the commanders of the army governed them by authority of Cæsar.

9. The temples were destroyed, the people were forced to abandon their worship of the invisible God and to sacrifice victims to pagan idols.

10. Warriors were made of the nobles; the women were ravished from their husbands; the lower classes, reduced to slavery, were sent by thousands beyond the seas.

11. As to the children, all were put to the sword; soon, through all the land of Israel, nothing was heard but weeping and wailing.

12. In this dire distress the people remembered their powerful God; they implored his mercy and besought him to forgive them; our Father, in his inexhaustible goodness, heeded their prayers.

IV.

1. And now the time had come, which the Supreme Judge, in his boundless clemency, had chosen to incarnate himself in a human being.

2. And the Eternal Spirit, which dwelt in a state of complete inertness and supreme beatitude, awakened and detached itself from the Eternal Being for an indefinite period,

3. In order to indicate, in assuming the human form, the means of identifying ourselves with the Divinity and of attaining eternal felicity.

4. And to teach us, by his example, how we may reach a state of moral purity and separate the soul from its gross envelope, that it may attain the perfection necessary to enter the Kingdom of Heaven which is immutable and where eternal happiness reigns.

5. Soon after, a wonderful child was born in the land of Israel; God himself, through the mouth of this child, spoke of the nothingness of the body and of the grandeur of the soul.

6. The parents of this new-born child were poor people, belonging by birth to a family of exalted piety, which disregarded its former worldly greatness to magnify the name of the Creator and thank him for the misfortunes with which he was pleased to try them.

7. To reward them for their perseverance in the path of truth, God blessed the first-born of this family; he chose him as his elect, and sent him forth to raise those that had fallen into evil, and to heal them that suffered.

8. The divine child, to whom was given the name of Issa, commenced even in his most tender years to speak of the one and indivisible God, exhorting the people that had strayed from the path of righteousness to repent and purify themselves of the sins they had committed.

9. People came from all parts to listen and marvel at the words of wisdom that fell from his infant lips; all the Israelites united in proclaiming that the Eternal Spirit dwelt within this child.

10. When Issa had attained the age of thirteen, when an Israelite should take a wife,

11. The house in which his parents dwelt and earned their livelihood in modest labor, became a meeting place for the rich and noble, who desired to gain for a son-in-law the young Issa, already celebrated for his edifying discourses in the name of the Almighty.

12. It was then that Issa clandestinely left his father's house, went out of Jerusalem, and, in company with some merchants, traveled toward Sindh

13. That he might perfect himself in the divine word and study the laws of the great Buddhas.

V.

1. In the course of his fourteenth year, young Issa, blessed by God, journeyed beyond the Sindh and settled among the Aryas in the beloved country of God.

2. The fame of his name spread along the Northern Sindh. When he passed through the country of the five rivers and the Radjipoutan, the worshipers of the god Djaïne begged him to remain in their midst.

3. But he left the misguided admirers of Djaïne and visited Juggernaut, in the province of Orsis, where the remains of Viassa-Krichna rest, and where he received a joyous welcome from the white priests of Brahma.

4. They taught him to read and understand the Vedas, to heal by prayer, to teach and explain the Holy Scripture, to cast out evil spirits from the body of man and give him back human semblance.

5. He spent six years in Juggernaut, Rajegriha, Benares, and the other holy cities; all loved him, for Issa lived in peace with the Vaisyas and the Soudras, to whom he taught the Holy Scripture.

6. But the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas declared that the Great Para-Brahma forbade them to approach those whom he had created from his entrails and from his feet:

7. That the Vaisyas were authorized to listen only to the reading of the Vedas, and that never save on feast days.

8. That the Soudras were not only forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas, but to gaze upon them even; for their condition was to perpetually serve and act as slaves to the Brahmans, the Kshatriyas, and even to the Vaisyas.

9. "Death alone can free them from servitude," said Para-Brahma. "Leave them, therefore, and worship with us the gods who will show their anger against you if you disobey them."

10. But Issa would not heed them; and going to the Soudras, preached against the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas.

11. He strongly denounced the men who robbed their fellow-beings of their rights as men, saying: "God the Father establishes no difference between his children, who are all equally dear to him."

12. Issa denied the divine origin of the Vedas and the Pouranas, declaring to his followers that one law had been given to men to guide them in their actions.

13. "Fear thy God, bow down the knee before

Him only, and to Him only must thy offerings be made."

14. Issa denied the Trimourti and the incarnation of Para-Brahma in Vishnou, Siva, and other gods, saying:

15. "The Eternal Judge, the Eternal Spirit, composes the one and indivisible soul of the universe, which alone creates, contains, and animates the whole."

16. "He alone has willed and created, he alone has existed from eternity and will exist without end; he has no equal neither in the heavens nor on this earth."

17. "The Great Creator shares his power with no one, still less with inanimate objects as you have been taught, for he alone possesses supreme power."

18. "He willed it, and the world appeared; by one divine thought, he united the waters and separated them from the dry portion of the globe. He is the cause of the mysterious life of

man, in whom he has breathed a part of his being."

19. "And he has subordinated to man, the land, the waters, the animals, and all that he has created, and which he maintains in immutable order by fixing the duration of each."

20. "The wrath of God shall soon be let loose on man, for he has forgotten his Creator and filled his temples with abominations, and he adores a host of creatures which God has subordinated to him."

21. "For, to be pleasing to stones and metals, he sacrifices human beings in whom dwells a part of the spirit of the Most High."

22. "For he humiliates them that labor by the sweat of their brow to gain the favor of an idler who is seated at a sumptuously spread table."

23. "They that deprive their brothers of divine happiness shall themselves be deprived of it, and the Brahmans and the Kshatriyas shall become the Soudras of the Soudras with whom the Eternal shall dwell eternally."

24. "For on the day of the Last Judgment, the Soudras and the Vaisyas shall be forgiven because of their ignorance, while God shall visit his wrath on them that have arrogated his rights."

25. The Vaisyas and the Soudras were struck with admiration, and demanded of Issa how they should pray to secure their happiness.

26. "Do not worship idols, for they do not hear you; do not listen to the Vedas, where the truth is perverted; do not believe yourself first in all things, and do not humiliate your neighbor."

27. "Help the poor, assist the weak, harm no one, do not covet what you have not and what you see in the possession of others."

VI.

1. The white priests and the warriors becoming cognizant of the discourse addressed by Issa to the Soudras, resolved upon his death and sent their servants for this purpose in search of the young prophet.

2. But Issa, warned of this danger by the Soudras, fled in the night from Juggernaut, gained the mountains, and took refuge in the Gothamide Country, the birth-place of the great Buddha Cakya-Mouni, among the people who adored the only and sublime Brahma.

3. Having perfectly learned the Pali tongue, the just Issa applied himself to the study of the sacred rolls of Soutras.

4. Six years later, Issa, whom the Buddha had chosen to spread his holy word, could perfectly explain the sacred rolls.

5. He then left Nepal and the Himalaya Mountains, descended into the valley of Rajipoutan and went westward, preaching to divers people of the supreme perfection of man,

6. And of the good we must do unto others, which is the surest means of quickly merging ourselves in the Eternal Spirit. "He who shall have recovered his primitive purity at death," said Issa, "shall have obtained the forgiveness of his sins, and shall have the right to contemplate the majestic figure of God."

7. In traversing the pagan territories, the divine Issa taught the people that the adoration of visible gods was contrary to the laws of nature.

8. "For man," said he, "has not been favored with the sight of the image of God nor the ability to construct a host of divinities resembling the Eternal."

9. "Furthermore, it is incompatible with the human conscience to think less of the grandeur of divine purity than of animals; or of works made by the hand of man from stone or metal."

10. "The Eternal Legislator is one; there is no God but him; he has shared the world with no one, neither has he confided his intentions to anyone."

11. "Just as a father may deal toward his children, so shall God judge men after death according to his merciful laws; never will he humiliate his child by causing his soul to emigrate, as in a purgatory, into the body of an animal."

12. "The heavenly law," said the Creator through the lips of Issa, "is averse to the sacri-

fice of human victims to a statue or animal; for I have sacrificed to man all the animals and everything the world contains."

13. "Everything has been sacrificed to man, who is directly and closely linked to Me, his Father; therefore, he that shall have robbed Me of My child shall be severely judged and punished according to the divine law."

14. "Man is as nothing before the Eternal Judge, to the same degree that the animal is before man."

15. "Therefore, I say to you, abandon your idols and perform no ceremonies that separate you from your Father and bind you to priests from whom the face of heaven is turned away."

16. "For it is they who have allured you from the true God, and whose superstitions and cruelty are leading you to perversion of the intellect and the loss of all moral sense."

VII.

1. The words of Issa spread among the pagans,

in the countries through which he traveled, and the inhabitants abandoned their idols.

2. Seeing which, the priests demanded from him who glorified the name of the true God, proofs of the accusations he brought against them and demonstration of the worthlessness of idols in the presence of the people.

3. And Issa replied to them: "If your idols and your animals are mighty, and really possess a supernatural power, let them annihilate me on the spot!"

4. "Perform a miracle," retorted the priests, "and let thy God confound our own, if they are loathsome to him."

5. But Issa then said: "The miracles of our God began when the universe was created; they occur each day, each instant; whosoever does not see them is deprived of one of the most beautiful gifts of life."

6. "And it is not against pieces of inanimate stone, metal, or wood, that the wrath of God shall find free vent, but it shall fall upon man,

who, in order to be saved, should destroy all the idols they have raised."

7. "Just as a stone and a grain of sand, worthless in themselves to man, await with resignation the moment when he shall take and make them into something useful."

8. "So should man await the great favor to be granted him by God in honoring him with a decision."

9. "But woe be to you, adversary of man, if it be not a favor that you await, but rather the wrath of Divinity; woe be to you if you await until it attests its power through miracles!"

10. "For it is not the idols that shall be annihilated in His wrath, but those that have raised them; their hearts shall be the prey of everlasting fire, and their lacerated bodies shall serve as food for wild beasts."

11. "God shall drive away the contaminated ones of his flocks, but shall take back to himself those that have strayed because they misconceived the heavenly atom which dwelt in them."

12. Seeing the powerlessness of their priests, the pagans believed the words of Issa, and fearing the wrath of the Divinity, broke their idols into fragments; as to the priests, they fled to escape the vengeance of the people.

13. And Issa also taught the pagans not to strive to see the Eternal Spirit with their own eyes, but to endeavor to feel it in their hearts, and, by a truly pure soul, to make themselves worthy of its favors.

14. "Not only must you desist from offering human sacrifices," said he, "but you must immolate no animal to which life has been given, for all things have been created for the benefit of man."

15. "Do not take what belongs to others, for it would be robbing your neighbor of the goods he has acquired by the sweat of his brow."

16. "Deceive no one, that you may not yourself be deceived; strive to justify yourself before the last judgment, for it will then be too late."

17. "Do not give yourself up to debauchery, for it is a violation of the laws of God."

18. "You shall attain supreme beatitude, not only by purifying yourself, but also by leading others into the path that shall permit them to regain primitive perfection."

VIII.

1. The fame of Issa's sermons spread to the neighboring countries, and, when he reached Persia, the priests were terrified and forbade the inhabitants to listen to him.

2. But when they saw that all the villages welcomed him with joy, and eagerly listened to his preaching, they caused his arrest and brought him before the high-priest, where he was submitted to the following interrogatory:

3. "Who is this new God of whom thou speaketh? Dost thou not know, unhappy man that thou art, that Saint Zoroaster is the only just one admitted to the honor of receiving communications from the Supreme Being,

4. "Who has commanded the angels to draw up in writing the word of God, laws that were given to Zoroaster in paradise?"

5. "Who then art thou that darest to blaspheme our God and sow doubt in the hearts of believers?"

6. And Issa replied: "It is not of a new god that I speak, but of our heavenly Father, who existed before the beginning and will still be after the eternal end."

7. "It was of him I spoke to the people, who, even as an innocent child, can not yet understand God by the mere strength of their intelligence and penetrate his spiritual and divine sublimity."

8. "But, as a new-born child recognizes the maternal breast even in obscurity, so your people, induced in error by your erroneous doctrines and religious ceremonies, have instinctively recognized their Father in the Father of whom I am the prophet."

9. "The Eternal Being says to your people through the intermediary of my mouth: 'You shall not adore the sun, for it is only a part of the world I have created for man.'"

10. "The sun rises that it may warm you dur-

ing your labor; it sets that it may give you the hours of rest I have myself fixed."

11. "It is to Me, and to Me only, that you owe all you possess, all that is around you, whether above or beneath you."

12. "But," interjected the priests, "how could a nation live according to the laws of justice, if it possessed no preceptors?"

13. Then Issa replied: "As long as the people had no priests, they were governed by the law of nature and retained their candor of soul."

14. "Their souls were in God, and to communicate with the Father, they had recourse to the intermediary of no idol or animal, nor to fire, as you practice here."

15. "You claim that we must worship the sun, the genius of Good and that of Evil; well, your doctrine is an abomination, I say to you, the sun acts not spontaneously, but by the will of the Invisible Creator who has given it existence,

16. "And who has willed that this orb should

light the day and warm the labor and the crops of man."

17. "The Eternal Spirit is the soul of all that is animated; you commit a grievous sin in dividing it into the spirit of Evil and the spirit of Good, for there is no God save that of good,

18. "Who, like the father of a family, does good only to his children, forgiving all their faults if they repent of them."

19. "And the spirit of Evil dwells on this earth, in the heart of men who turn the children of God from the right path."

20. "Therefore I say to you, beware of the day of judgment, for God will inflict a terrible punishment on all who have turned his children from the right path and filled them with superstitions and prejudices,"

21. "On them that have blinded the seeing, transmitted contagion to the sound of health, and taught the adoration of things which God has subjected to man for his own good and to aid him in his labor."

22. "Your doctrine is therefore the fruit of your errors, for, in desiring to approach the God of Truth, you have created false gods."

23. After listening to him, the wise men resolved to do him no harm. In the night, while the city was wrapped in slumber, they conducted him outside the walls and left him on the highway, hoping that he might soon become the prey of wild beasts.

24. But, being protected by the Lord our God, Saint Issa continued his way unmolested.

IX.

1. Issa, whom the Creator had chosen to recall the true God to the people that were plunged in depravities, was twenty-nine years of age when he arrived in the land of Israel.

2. Since the departure of Issa, the pagans had heaped still more atrocious sufferings on the Israelites, and the latter were a prey to the deepest gloom.

3. Many among them had already begun to desert the laws of their God and those of Mossa, in the hope of softening their harsh conquerors.

4. In the presence of this situation, Issa exhorted his compatriots not to despair, because the day of the redemption of sins was near, and he confirmed their belief in the God of their fathers.

5. "Children, do not yield to despair," said the Heavenly Father through the mouth of Issa, "for I have heard your voices, and your cries have ascended to me."

6. "Weep not, O my beloved, for your sobs have touched the heart of your Father, and he has forgiven you as he forgave your ancestors."

7. "Do not abandon your families to plunge into debauchery, do not lose the nobility of your sentiments and worship idols that will remain deaf to your voices."

8. "Fill my temple with your hopes and your patience, and do not abjure the religion of your fathers, for I alone have guided them and heaped blessings upon them."

9. "Raise them that have fallen, feed them that are hungry, and help them that are sick, that you may all be pure and just on the day of the last judgment that I am preparing for you."

10. The Israelites flocked to hear the words of Issa, asking him where they should thank the Heavenly Father, since their enemies had razed their temples and laid violent hands on their sacred vessels.

11. Issa replied to them that God did not speak of temples built by the hands of men, but that he meant thereby the human heart, which is the true temple of God.

12. "Enter into your temple, into your own heart, illuminate it with good thoughts, patience, and the unflinching confidence you should place in your Father."

13. "And your sacred vessels are your hands and your eyes; look and do what is agreeable to God, for, in doing good to your neighbor, you perform a rite that embellishes the temple in which dwells the One who has given you life."

14. "For God has created you in his image; innocent, pure of soul, with a heart filled with kindness, and destined, not to the conception of evil projects, but to be the sanctuary of love and justice."

15. "Do not therefore sully your hearts, I say to you, for the Eternal Being dwells there always."

16. "If you wish to accomplish works stamped with love and piety, do them with an open heart, and let not your actions be inspired by the hope of gain or by thought of profit."

17. "For such deeds would not contribute to your salvation, and you would then fall into a state of moral degradation in which theft, falsehood, and murder, seem like generous actions."

X.

1. Saint Issa went from place to place strengthening, by the word of God, the courage of the Israelites, who were ready to succumb under the weight of their despair, and thousands followed him to hear his preaching.

2. But the rulers of the cities feared him, and word was sent to the Governor, who resided in Jerusalem, that a man named Issa had come into the country, that his sermons excited the people against the authorities, that the crowd listened to him assiduously and neglected their duties to the State, claiming that soon they would be rid of their intruding rulers.

3. Then Pilate, the Governor of Jerusalem, ordered that the preacher Issa be arrested, brought to the city and conducted before the judges; not to arouse the dissatisfaction of the people, however, Pilate commanded the priests and the learned men, old men of Hebrew origin, to judge him in the temple.

4. Meanwhile, Issa, still continuing to preach, arrived in Jerusalem; having heard of his coming all the inhabitants, who already knew him by reputation, came to meet him.

5. They greeted him respectfully and threw open the doors of their temple that they might hear from his lips what he had said in the other cities of Israel.

6. And Issa said to them: "The human race is perishing because of its want of faith, for the gloom and the tempest have bewildered the human flock, and they have lost their shepherd."

7. "But tempests do not last forever, and the clouds will not hide the eternal light, the heavens shall soon be serene again, the celestial light shall spread throughout the world, and the strayed sheep shall gather around their shepherd."

8. "Do not strive to seek direct roads in the obscurity for fear of stumbling into the ditch, but gather your remaining strength, sustain one another, place your entire trust in God, and wait till a streak of light appears."

9. "He that upholds his neighbor upholds himself, and whosoever protects his family protects his race and his country."

10. "For rest assured that the day of your deliverance from darkness is near; you shall gather together in one single family, and your enemy — he who knows nothing of the favor of the Great God — will tremble in fear."

11. The priests and the old men that listened to him, full of admiration at this language, asked of him if it were true that he had attempted to arouse the people against the authorities of the country, as had been reported to the Governor, Pilate.

12. "Is it possible to arise against misled men from whom the obscurity has hidden their path and their door?" returned Issa. "I have only warned these unfortunate people, as I warn them in this temple, that they may not advance further on their dark paths, for an abyss is yawning beneath their feet."

13. "Worldly power is not of long duration, and it is subject to innumerable changes. It would be of no use to a man to rebel against it, for one power always succeeds another power, and it shall be thus until the extinction of human existence."

14. "Do you not see, on the contrary, that the rich and the powerful are sowing among the children of Israel a spirit of rebellion against the eternal power of heaven?"

15. And the learned men then said: "Who art thou, and from what country hast thou come into our own? We had never heard of thee, and do not even know thy name."

16. "I am an Israelite," responded Issa, "and, on the very day of my birth, I saw the walls of Jerusalem, and I heard the weeping of my brothers reduced to slavery, and the moans of my sisters carried away by pagans into captivity."

17. "And my soul was painfully grieved when I saw that my brothers had forgotten the true God; while yet a child, I left my father's house to go among other nations."

18. "But hearing that my brothers were enduring still greater tortures, I returned to the land in which my parents dwelt, that I might recall to my brothers the faith of their ancestors, which teaches us patience in this world that we may obtain perfect and sublime happiness on High."

19. And the learned old men asked him this question: "It is claimed that you deny the laws of Mossa and teach the people to desert the temple of God?"

20. And Issa said: "We can not demolish what has been given by our Heavenly Father and what has been destroyed by sinners; but I have recommended the purification of all stain from the heart, for that is the veritable temple of God."

21. "As to the laws of Mossa, I have striven to re-establish them in the heart of men; and I say to you, that you are in ignorance of their true meaning, for it is not vengeance, but forgiveness that they teach; but the sense of these laws have been perverted."

XI.

1. Having heard Issa, the priests and learned men decided among themselves that they would not judge him, for he was doing no one harm, and having presented themselves before Pilate, made Governor of Jerusalem by the pagan king of the land of Romeles, they spoke to him thus:

2. "We have seen the man whom thou accusest of inciting our people to rebellion, we have heard his preaching and know that he is of our people."

3. "But the rulers of the towns have sent thee false reports, for he is a just man who teaches the people the word of God. After interrogating him, we dismissed him that he might go in peace."

4. The Governor overcome with passion sent disguised servants to Issa, that they might watch all his actions and report to the authorities every word he addressed to the people.

5. Nevertheless Issa continued to visit the neighboring towns and preach the true ways of the Creator, exhorting the Hebrews to patience and promising them a speedy deliverance.

6. And during all this time, a multitude followed wherever he went, many never leaving him and acting as servants.

7. And Issa said to them: "Do not believe in miracles performed by the hands of man, for He who dominates nature is alone capable of doing supernatural things, while man is powerless to soften the violence of the wind and bestow rain."

8. "Nevertheless, there is a miracle which it is possible for man to accomplish; it is when, full of a sincere faith, he resolves to tear from his heart all evil thought and, to attain his end, shuns the paths of iniquity."

9. "And all things which are done without God are but gross errors, seductions, and illusions, which only demonstrate to what point the soul of the man who practices this art is filled with deceit, falsehood, and impurity."

10. "Put no faith in oracles, God alone knows the future; he that has recourse to sorcerers defiles the temple within his heart and gives proof of distrust toward his Creator."

11. "Faith in sorcerers and their oracles destroys the innate simplicity and child-like purity in man; a diabolical power takes possession of him and forces him to commit all sorts of crimes and to adore idols."

12. "While the Lord our God, who has not his equal, is one, all-powerful, omniscient, and omnipresent; it is he who possesses all wisdom and all light."

13. "It is to him you must have recourse to be comforted in your sorrows, assisted in your toils, healed in your sickness; whosoever shall have recourse to him shall not be refused."

14. "The secret of nature is in the hands of God; for the world before appearing, existed in the depth of the divine mind; it became material and visible by the will of the Most High."

15. "When you wish to address him, become as children once more, for you know neither the past, nor the present, nor the future, and God is the master of time."

XII.

1. "O just man," said the disguised servants of the Governor of Jerusalem, "tell us should we do the will of our Cæsar or await our near deliverance?"

2. And Issa, having recognized in his questioners the spies sent to watch him, said to them: "I have not said that you should be delivered from Cæsar; it is the soul plunged in error which shall have its deliverance."

3. "There can be no family without a head, and there would be no order in a nation without a Cæsar, who must be blindly obeyed, for he alone shall answer for his actions before the supreme tribunal."

4. "Does Cæsar possess a divine right," again questioned the spies, "and is he the best of mortals?"

5. "There is no perfection among men, but there are also some that are sick whom the men elected and intrusted with this mission must care for, by using the means that are conferred upon them by the sacred law of our Heavenly Father."

6. "Clemency and justice, these are the highest gifts granted to Cæsar; his name will be illustrious if he abides thereby."

7. "But he who acts otherwise, who goes beyond the limit of his power over his subject, even to placing his life in danger, offends the great Judge and lowers his dignity in the sight of men."

8. At this point, an aged woman, who had approached the group that she might better hear Issa, was pushed aside by one of the men in disguise who placed himself before her.

9. Issa then said: "It is not meet that a son should push aside his mother to occupy the first place which should be hers. Whosoever respecteth not his mother, the most sacred being next to God, is unworthy the name of son."

10. "Listen, therefore, to what I am about to say: "Respect woman, for she is the mother of the universe and all the truth of divine creation dwells within her."

11. "She is the basis of all that is good and beautiful, as she is also the germ of life and death. On her depends the entire existence of man, for she is his moral and natural support in all his works."

12. "She gives you birth amid sufferings; by the sweat of her brow she watches over your growth, and until her death you cause her the most intense anguish. Bless her and adore her, for she is your only friend and support upon earth."

13. "Respect her, protect her; in doing this, you will win her love and her heart, and you will be pleasing to God; for this shall many of your sins be remitted."

14. "Therefore, love your wives and respect them, for to-morrow they shall be mothers, and later grandmothers of a whole nation."

15. "Be submissive toward your wife; her love ennobles man, softens his hardened heart, tames the beast and makes of it a lamb."

16. "The wife and the mother, inestimable treasures bestowed on you by God; they are the most beautiful ornaments of the universe, and from them shall be born all that shall inhabit the world."

17. "Just as the God of armies separated day from night and the land from the waters, so woman possesses the divine talent of separating good intentions from evil thoughts in men."

18. Therefore I say to you: "After God, your best thoughts should belong to women and to wives; woman being to you the divine temple

wherein you shall most easily obtain perfect happiness."

19. "Draw your moral strength from this temple; there you will forget your sorrows and failures, you will recover the wasted forces necessary to help your neighbor."

20. "Do not expose her to humiliation; you would thereby humiliate yourself and lose the sentiment of love, without which nothing exists here below."

21. "Protect your wife, that she may protect you and all your family; all that you shall do for your mother, your wife, for a widow, or another woman in distress, you shall have done for God."

XIII.

1. Saint Issa thus taught the people of Israel for three years in every city, in every village, on the roadways, and in the fields, and all that he had predicted came to pass.

2. During all this time, the disguised servants of the Governor Pilate observed him closely, but

without hearing anything that resembled the reports hitherto sent by the rulers of the cities concerning Issa.

3. But the Governor Pilate, becoming alarmed at the too great popularity of Saint Issa, who, according to his enemies, wanted to incite the people and be made king, ordered one of his spies to accuse him.

4. Soldiers were then sent to arrest him, and he was cast into a dungeon where he was made to suffer various tortures that he might be forced to accuse himself, which would permit them to put him to death.

5. Thinking of the perfect beatitude of his brothers only, the saint endured these sufferings in the name of his Creator.

6. The servants of Pilate continued to torture him and reduced him to a state of extreme weakness; but God was with him and did not suffer him to die.

7. Hearing of the sufferings and tortures inflicted on their saint, the principal priests and

learned elders begged the Governor to liberate Issa on the occasion of an approaching great feast.

8. But the Governor met them with a decided refusal. They then begged him to bring Issa before the tribunal of the Ancients, that he might be condemned or acquitted before the feast, to which Pilate consented.

9. On the morrow the Governor called together the chief rulers, priests, elders, and law-givers, with the object of making them pass judgment on Issa.

10. The saint was brought from his prison, and he was seated before the Governor between two thieves that were to be tried with him, to show the people that he was not the only one to be condemned.

11. And Pilate, addressing Issa, said: "O, man! is it true that thou hast incited the people to rebel against the authorities that thou mayest become king of Israel?"

12. "None can become king by his own will," replied Issa, "and they that have said that I

incited the people have spoken falsely. I have never spoken but of the King of Heaven, whom I taught the people to adore."

13. "For the sons of Israël have lost their original purity, and if they have not recourse to the true God, they shall be sacrificed and their temple shall fall in ruins."

14. "Temporal power maintains order in a country; I therefore taught them not to forget it; I said to them: "'Live in conformity to your position and fortune, that you may not disturb public order;' and I exhorted them also to remember that disorder reigned in their hearts and minds."

15. "Therefore the King of Heaven has punished them and suppressed their national kings; nevertheless, I said to them, if you resign yourself to your fate, the kingdom of heaven shall be reserved for you as a reward."

16. At this moment, witnesses were introduced; one of them testified as follows: "Thou hast said to the people that temporal power was noth-

ing to that of the King that shall free the Israelites from the pagan yoke."

17. "Blessed be thou," said Issa, "for having spoken the truth; the King of Heaven is more powerful and great than terrestrial laws, and his kingdom surpasses all the kingdoms here below."

18. "And the time is not far when, in conformity with the divine will, the people of Israel will purify themselves of their sins; for it is said that a precursor shall come to announce the deliverance of the nation and unite it in one family."

19. And addressing himself to the judges, the Governor said: "Hear you this? The Israelite Issa admits the crime of which he is accused. Judge him according to your laws and sentence him to capital punishment."

20. "We can not condemn him," replied the priests and the ancients; "thou hast thyself heard that he made allusion to the King of Heaven, and that he has preached nothing to the people which constitutes insubordination against the law."

21. The Governor then summoned the witness who, at the instigation of his master, Pilate, had betrayed Issa; and when this man came he addressed Issa thus: "Didst thou not claim to be the king of Israel in saying that the Lord of heaven had sent thee to prepare his people?"

22. And Issa having blessed him, said: "Thou shalt be forgiven, for what thou sayest cometh not of thee!" Then turning to the Governor, he continued: "Why lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to live in falsehood, since, even without this, thou hast the power to condemn an innocent man?"

23. At these words, the Governor became violently enraged and ordered the death of Issa, while he discharged the two thieves.

24. The judges, having deliberated among themselves, said to Pilate: "We will not take upon our heads the great sin of condemning an innocent man and of acquitting two thieves, a thing contrary to our laws."

25. "Do therefore as thou pleases." Having thus spoken, the priests and wise men went out

and washed their hands in a sacred vessel, saying: "We are innocent of the death of a just man."

XIV.

1. By order of the Governor, the soldiers seized upon Issa and the two thieves whom they conducted to the place of torture, where they nailed them to the crosses they had erected.

2. All that day, the bodies of Issa and of the two thieves remained suspended, dripping with blood, under the guard of soldiers; the people stood around about them, while the parents of the crucified men wept and prayed.

3. At sunset, the agony of Issa came to an end. He lost consciousness, and the soul of this just man detached itself from his body to become part of the Divinity.

4. Thus ended the terrestrial existence of the reflection of the Eternal Spirit, under the form of a man who had saved hardened sinners and endured so much suffering.

5. Pilate, however, becoming alarmed at his own actions, gave up the body of the holy man to his relations, who buried him near the place of his execution; the multitude then came to pray over his tomb and filled the air with weeping and wailing.

6. Three days later the Governor sent his soldiers to take up the body of Issa and bury it elsewhere, fearing a general uprising of the people.

7. The following day the sepulcher was found open and empty by the multitude; and the rumor immediately spread that the Supreme Judge had sent his angels to take away the mortal remains of the saint in whom dwelt on earth a part of the Divine Spirit.

8. When this report came to the ears of Pilate he fell into a rage and forbade everyone, under penalty of perpetual slavery, to ever utter the name of Issa and to pray to the Lord for him.

9. But the people continued to weep and praise their master aloud; therefore many were placed in captivity, subjected to torture, and put to death.

10. And the disciples of Saint Issa left the land of Israel and went in all directions among the pagans, telling them that they must abandon their gross errors, think of the salvation of their souls, and of the perfect felicity in store for men in the enlightened and immaterial world where, in repose and in all his purity, dwells the great Creator in perfect majesty.

11. The pagans, their kings and soldiers, listened to these preachers, abandoned their absurd beliefs, deserted their priests and their idols to sing the praises of the all-wise Creator of the universe, the King of kings, whose heart is filled with infinite mercy.

EPITOME.

IN reading the life of Issa (Jesus Christ), we are at first struck by the similarity between some of its principal passages and the biblical narrative; while, on the other hand, we also find equally remarkable contradictions, which constitute the difference between the Buddhist version and that found in the Old and New Testaments.

To explain this singularity, we must take into account the periods in which the facts were recorded.

In childhood, we were taught to believe that the Pentateuch was written by Moses himself; but the careful investigations of co-temporary savants have conclusively demonstrated, that in the days of Moses, and even long after him, there existed no writings in those countries bathed by the Mediterranean, save the Egyptian hieroglyphics and the cuneiform inscriptions still found in the excavations of Babylon. But we know, to the contrary, that the alphabet and parchment were known and used in China and India long before Moses.

Of this we have ample proof.

The sacred books of the "religion of the wise men," teaches us that the alphabet was invented in China, in 2800 B. C., by Fou-si, who was the first Chinese emperor to embrace that religion. It was he who also arranged the ritual and outward ceremonies. Yaou, the fourth Chinese emperor who adopted the same faith, published moral and civil laws, and, in the year 2228 B. C., prepared a penal code.

On his accession to the throne, Soune, the fifth emperor, proclaimed the "religion of the wise men" as the religion of state; and in 2282, he enacted new penal laws. These laws, modified by the Emperor Woo-Wang, who was the founder of the Chow dynasty in 1122, are now known under the name of the "Changes."

Moreover, the doctrine of Buddha-Fo, whose real name was Cakya-Mouni, was written on parchment. Foism began to spread through China about the year 260 B. C.; in 206, an emperor of the Tsine dynasty, who desired to study Buddhism, sent to India for the Buddhist Silifan; while the Emperor Ming-Ti, of the Han dynasty, one year before Christ, procured the sacred books written by Cakya-Mouni, the founder of Buddhism, who lived about the year 1200 before Christ.

The doctrine of Buddha Gaouthama, or Gautama, who lived six hundred years before Christ, was written on parchment in the Pali language. At this epoch, there already existed in India about eighty-four thousand Buddhist manuscripts, the compiling of which must have required a considerable number of years.

While the Chinese and Hindoos already possessed a rich collection of written literature, the less fortunate, or more ignorant nations, who had no alphabet, transmitted orally, from generation to generation, what came to pass. Owing to the unreliability of the human memory, and its relative incapacity, not to speak of oriental embellishments, historical facts soon degenerated into fabulous legends, which, later, were gathered by unknown compilers and given to the world under the title of the "Five Books of Moses." The legend also attributes a truly extraordinary divine power to this Hebrew legislator, and credits him with a series of miracles performed in the presence of Pharaoh; might it not be equally mistaken in declaring that he was an Israelite by birth?

The Hindoo chroniclers, on the contrary, thanks to the invention of the alphabet, were enabled to preserve, not fabulous legends, but a concise narrative of recent events accomplished in

their midst, as well as of the reports received from the merchants who had just visited foreign lands.

It is necessary to remark here that during this period of antiquity, as in our own days, oriental public life was concentrated in the bazaars, where the events of the day and the news from foreign nations were propagated by caravans of merchants, who were usually followed by a number of dervises who readily told all they had seen and heard on their journey, in exchange for food. In fact, this was their sole means of subsistence.

The commerce of India with Egypt, and later with Europe, was carried on through Jerusalem, where, even as early as the reign of Solomon, Hindoo caravans brought precious metals and all that was necessary for the construction of the temple. From Europe, the merchandise came to Jerusalem by sea, and was unloaded in the harbor where Jaffa now stands.

The chronicles in question were written before, during, and after Christ; although no attention was paid to Jesus during his sojourn in India, where he came as a simple pilgrim to study the Brahman and Buddhist laws.

But later, when the events which had aroused Israel were related in India, these chroniclers — after having committed to writing all they had

just heard concerning the prophet Issa, whom an oppressed nation had followed and who had been executed by the order of Pilate—remembered that this same Issa had recently lived among them and studied in their midst, and that he had then returned to his own country. A deep interest was immediately aroused concerning this man who had so rapidly grown in importance in their eyes, and they at once began an investigation into his birth, his past, and every detail of his existence.

The two manuscripts read to me by the lama of the Himis Convent, were compiled from divers copies written in the Thibetan tongue, translated from rolls belonging to the Lassa library and brought from India, Nepal, and Maghada two hundred years after Christ. These were placed in a convent standing on Mount Marbour, near Lassa, where the Dalai-Lama now resides.

These rolls were written in the Pali tongue, which certain lamas study carefully that they may translate the sacred writings from that language into the Thibetan dialect.

The chroniclers were Buddhists belonging to the sect of Buddha Gautama.

The information contained about Christ is oddly mixed, without relation or coherence with other events of that period.

Without preliminary details or explanation, the manuscript begins by announcing that, in the very year of the death of Christ, a few merchants just returned from Judea have brought back the information that a just man named Issa, an Israelite, after having been twice acquitted by his judges — as was the man of God — was finally put to death at the instigation of the Pagan Governor, Pilate, who feared that Jesus would take advantage of his popularity to re-establish the Kingdom of Israel and expel its conquerors from the land.

Then comes the somewhat incoherent tale of Jesus preaching among the Guebers and other pagans, evidently written in the year following the death of Christ, in whom there is a growing interest. In one of these the merchants relate what is known of the origin of Jesus and of his family, while another gives the story of the expulsion of his partisans and the bitter persecutions they endured.

It is not until the end of the second volume is reached, that we find the first categorical affirmation of the chronicler where he declares that Issa is blessed by God and the best of all men; that he is the chosen one of the great Brahma, the man in whom is incarnated the spirit detached from the Supreme Being at a period determined by fate.

Having explained that Issa was the son of poor parents and of Israelite extraction, the chronicler makes a slight digression with the object of telling us who were the children of Israel.

These fragments of the life of Issa, I have disposed of in chronological order, endeavoring to give them a character of unity totally wanting in the original form.

I leave to savants, philosophers, and theologians, the task of searching the cause of contradictions that may be found between the "Unknown Life of Issa," which I make public, and the story told by the Evangelists. But I am inclined to believe that nobody will hesitate to acknowledge that this version, recorded within three or four years after the death of Christ from the testimonies of eye witnesses, is more likely to bear the stamp of truth than the narratives of the Evangelists, who wrote at divers epochs, and so long a time after these events took place, that we can not be astonished if the facts have been altered or distorted.

Before taking up the life of Jesus, I must say a few words concerning the history of Moses, who, according to the usually accepted legend, was an Israelite. This fact is flatly contradicted by Buddhists. We are first told that Moses was a prince of Egypt, son of Pharaoh, and that he was merely instructed by the learned Israelites. By carefully

examining this important point, we are forced to admit that the Buddhist author may be right.

Although I have no intention to destroy the biblical legend on the origin of Moses, many will concur with me in the opinion that Moses was not a simple Israelite, for the very appreciable reason that his education was that of a prince of the land; and it is difficult to believe that a child brought by chance into the palace, could have been placed on a footing of equality with the son of the sovereign. The manner in which the Egyptians treated their slaves proves that they were not distinguished for mildness of character. A foundling would assuredly not have been tolerated among the children of Pharaoh, but would have been placed with the servants. Besides, and this is preponderating evidence, we must take into consideration the spirit of caste so strictly observed in ancient Egypt.

On the other hand, it is difficult to believe that Moses did not receive a complete education. How otherwise could we explain his great work of legislation, his broad views, and his high qualities as administrator?

But, if he were a prince, why did he join the Israelites? The explanation is simple enough. We know that among the ancients, as well as in our modern days, the succession to the throne

was frequently a bone of contention among brothers. Why not admit the hypothesis that Mossa, or Moses, wished to found a distinct kingdom, since the existence of an elder brother debarred him from the Egyptian throne? This consideration probably led him to place himself at the head of the Israelites, whom he admired for their firmness in their belief, as well as for their bodily strength. The Israelites of Egypt, we know, did not at all resemble their descendants physically, the blocks of granite used in building the palaces and the pyramids still stand as evidence of this.

The miracles performed in the presence of Pharaoh may be explained in the same way.

Without possessing definite arguments to deny these miracles performed by Moses, in the name of God, we must admit — without much difficulty, I believe — that the Buddhist verses are more plausible than the biblical paraphrase. The pest, small-pox, or cholera, must, in fact, have wrought terrible ravages in the dense mass of the population at a time when ideas on hygiene were still rudimentary, and when, in consequence, the scourge must have rapidly assumed frightful proportions.

Moses, who was of quick intelligence, could readily work on the fears of Pharaoh in the presence of this imminent danger, by declaring that

it was due to the intervention of the God of Israel in favor of his chosen people.

This was a most favorable opportunity to free the Israelites from their bondage and make them pass under his own power.

Conformably to the will of Pharaoh, still, according to the Buddhists, Moses led the Israelites beyond the walls of the city; but, instead of building a new city at a certain distance from the capital, as he had been commanded to do, he took them out of the Egyptian territory. The indignation of Pharaoh on seeing Moses' utter disregard of his orders can be easily imagined; and it is not therefore astonishing if he started in pursuit of the fugitives at the head of his soldiers. Taking into consideration the geographical situation of that region, it must be supposed that Moses traveled along the mountains and entered Arabia through the isthmus now cut by the Suez Canal. Pharaoh, on the contrary, led his troops in a more direct line in the direction of the Red Sea; then, to overtake the Israelites who had already gained the opposite shore, he boldly took advantage of the ebb of the sea into the gulf formed by the banks of the isthmus, and made his soldiers march through the shallow passage. But the distance across being much longer than he had anticipated, the flood-tide caught the

Egyptian army in the very middle of the sea and not one of them could escape death.

This fact, so simple in itself, was transformed into a religious legend in the succeeding centuries by the Israelites, who interpreted the incident as due to divine intervention in their favor and as a just punishment from the hands of God on their persecutors. We are led to believe, moreover, that Moses himself entertained this belief. But this is a thesis which I shall endeavor to develop in a future work.

The Buddhist chronicle then briefly describes the greatness and the downfall of the kingdom of Israel, as well as its conquest by strangers who reduced its inhabitants to a state of servitude.

The misfortunes that poured upon the Israelites and the afflictions that thereafter embittered their days, were, according to the chronicler, more than sufficient reasons for God to look with pity upon his people; and, wishing to come to their assistance, he resolved to descend upon earth under the guise of a prophet, that he might lead them back into the path of salvation.

The condition of things at that period therefore justified the belief that the coming of Jesus was signaled, imminent, and necessary.

This explains why the Buddhist traditions declare that the Eternal Spirit detached itself

from the Eternal Being and was incarnated in the new-born child of a pious and noble family.

The Buddhists, no doubt, as well as the Evangelists, wish to indicate thereby that the child belonged to the royal house of David; but the text of the Gospel, according to which the "child was conceived by the Holy Ghost," may be interpreted in two ways, while, according to the doctrine of Buddha, which is more in conformity with the laws of nature, the Spirit incarnated itself in a child that was already born, whom God blessed and chose to accomplish his mission here below.

At this point there is a void in the traditions of the Evangelists, who, whether through ignorance or negligence, tell us nothing of his infancy, his youth, and his education. They begin the history of Jesus by his first sermon, that is when, at the age of thirty, he returned to his own country.

All that is said by the Evangelists in regard to the infancy of Jesus is totally void of precision: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him," says one of the sacred authors, St. Luke, and again: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel."

As the Evangelists compiled their works long

after the death of Jesus, it is presumed that they merely consigned to writing the narratives that had come to them of the principal events of the life of Jesus.

The Buddhists, however, who compiled their chronicles immediately after the Passion, and who had the advantage of gathering the most accurate information on all points that interested them, give us a complete and exhaustive description of the life of Jesus.

In those unhappy days, when the struggle for existence seems to have destroyed all notion of God, the people of Israel were bowed down under the double oppression of the ambitious Herod, and of the avaricious despotic Romans. Then, as now, the Hebrews placed all their hope in Providence, which, they believed, would send them the inspired man who was to deliver them from their physical and moral sufferings. Time passed on, however, and no one took the initiative in a revolt against the tyranny of the governing power.

During this period of anxiety and hope, the people of Israel completely forgot that there existed in their midst a poor Israelite, who was a direct descendant of their King David. This poor man married a young girl who gave birth to a miraculous child.

Faithful to their traditions of devotion and respect for the race of their kings, the Hebrews, on hearing of this, flocked to see the child and congratulate the happy father. It is evident that Herod did not long remain in ignorance of what had taken place; and he feared that when the child had grown to manhood, he might take advantage of his popularity to regain the throne of his ancestors. He, therefore, sought the child, whom the Israelites endeavored to shield from the anger of the king; the latter then ordered the abominable massacre of children, hoping that Jesus might perish in this vast human hecatomb. But the family of Joseph, having obtained information of the terrible execution contemplated by Herod, fled into Egypt.

Some time later the family returned to its native land. The child had grown during these journeys in which his life had been more than once exposed. Then as now, the Oriental Israelites commenced to instruct their children at the age of five or six years. Forced to remain in concealment, the parents never allowed their son to leave their roof, and the latter no doubt spent his time in studying the sacred writings, so that on his return to Judea, he was far in advance of the boys of his own age, which greatly astonished the learned men. He was then in his thirteenth

year, the age at which, according to the Jewish law, a young man attains his majority and has the right to marry, as well as to fulfill his religious duties on an equal footing with adults.

There still exists an ancient religious custom among the Israelites which fixes the majority of a man at the age of thirteen, when the youth enters society and enjoys the full privileges of his elders. His marriage at this age is considered absolutely legal and indispensable, even, in warm countries. In Europe, however, this custom has fallen into desuetude and lost its importance, owing to local laws, as well as to the laws of nature, which do not hasten physical development to the same degree as in warmer countries.

His royal origin, his rare intelligence, and the extensive studies to which he had applied himself, caused him to be looked upon as an excellent suitor, and the most noble and rich sought him as a son-in-law. So the Israelites of our days seek the honor of marrying their daughters to the son of a rabbi or a learned man. But the studious youth, seemingly detached from all things corporal and devoured by a thirst for knowledge, stealthily left his father's house and fled to India with a departing caravan.

It is to be supposed that Jesus Christ chose India, first, because Egypt made part of the

Roman possessions at that period, and then because an active trade with India had spread marvelous reports in regard to the majestic character and inconceivable riches of art and science in that wonderful country, where the aspirations of civilized nations still tend in our own age.

Here the Evangelists again lose the thread of the terrestrial life of Jesus. St. Luke says: "He was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel," which conclusively proves that no one knew where the young man had gone, to so suddenly reappear sixteen years later.

Once in India, the country of marvels, Jesus began by frequenting the temples of the Djainites.

There still exists in the peninsula of Hindoostan a sect which bears the name of Djainism; it forms a link, as it were, between Buddhism and Brahmanism, and preaches the destruction of all other beliefs, which they declare to be steeped in error. It dates back to the seventh century before Christ, and its name is derived from the word "djaine" (conquering), which it assumes as a symbol of its triumph over its rivals.

Amazed at the young man's wonderful intellect, the Djainites begged him to remain in their midst; but Jesus left them to settle at Juggernaut, one of the principal cities of the Brahmans, and

enjoying great religious importance at the time of Christ, where he devoted himself to the study of treatises on religion, philosophy, etc. A cherished tradition claims that the ashes of the illustrious Brahman Krichna are preserved here in the hollow of a tree near a magnificent temple visited by thousands every year. Krichna is supposed to have lived 1580 before Christ, and it was he who gathered and arranged the Vedas, dividing the work into four books: Richt, Jagour, Saman, and Artafan. This celebrated Brahman, who in recognition of this work received the name of Viassa (he who has gathered and divided the Vedas), also compiled the Vedantha and eighteen Pouranas, composed of four hundred thousand strophes.

A library, rich in Sanscrit books and precious religious manuscripts, is also found at Juggernaut.

Jesus spent six years at this place, studying the language of the country and the Sanscrit tongue, which enabled him to dive deeply into all religious doctrines, philosophy, medicine, and mathematics. He found much to condemn in Brahman laws and customs, and entered into public debates with the Brahmans, who strove to convince him of the sacred character of their established customs. Among other things, Jesus

particularly censured the injustice of humiliating the laborer, and of not only depriving him of the benefits to come, but also of contesting his right to hear religious readings. And Jesus began to preach to the Soudras, the lowest caste of slaves, saying that God is one, according to their own laws, that all that is, exists through him, that all are equal in his sight, and that the Brahmans had obscured the great principle of monotheism in perverting the words of Brahma himself and insisting to excess on the exterior ceremonies of the religion.

These are the terms, according to the Brahman doctrine, in which God speaks of himself to the angels: "I have been since all eternity and shall be eternally. I am the first cause of all that exists in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, above and below, in heaven and in hell. I am older than all things. I am the Spirit and the creation of the universe and its creator. I am all-mighty, I am the God of gods, the King of kings; I am Para-Brahma, the great soul of the universe."

After the world had appeared by the mere wish of Para-Brahma, God created men, whom he divided into four classes, according to their color: white (Brahmans), red (Kshatriyas), yellow (Vaisyas), and black (Soudras). Brahma drew

the first from his own mouth, and gave them as their portion the government of the world, the teaching of the laws to men, and the power to heal and judge them. The Brahman alone, therefore, occupy the position of priests, and the preachers, or commentators of the Vedas only, must adopt celibacy.

The second caste, the Kshatriyas, came from the hand of Brahma. These he made warriors, intrusting them with the mission of defending and protecting society. The kings, princely rulers, governors, and troops, belong to this caste, which enjoys relations of the greatest cordiality with the Brahmans, because one can not exist without the other; and the peace of the country depends on the alliance of the sword and the light, of the temple of Brahma, and the royal throne.

The Vaisyas, who compose the third caste, were drawn by Brahma from his own entrails. They are destined to the plowing of the fields and the breeding of animals, to the exercise of all kinds of trades and commerce, that they may support the Brahmans and Kshatriyas. They are authorized to enter the temple and listen to the reading of the Vedas on feast days only, being obliged to remain at their business affairs on all other occasions.

The lowest caste, the blacks or Soudras, came from the feet of Brahma to be the humble servants and slaves of the three first castes. They are forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas; and to come in contact with them means contamination. They are wretched beings, robbed of all human rights, not daring to even gaze at the members of the superior castes, or defend themselves, and, in case of sickness, deprived of the care of a physician.

Death alone can free them from the consequences of their life of servitude; but to obtain this reward they must, during their entire life, cheerfully and faithfully serve a member of one of the privileged classes. Then only, after having performed these functions with excessive zeal and fidelity in the service of a Brahman or a Kshatriya, can the Soudra entertain the hope that, after death, his soul shall be elevated to a superior caste.

Should a Soudra be found wanting in respect toward a member of the privileged classes, or otherwise merit disgrace, he is expelled from his caste, degraded to the rank of a pariah, and banished from cities and villages; he becomes an object of universal contempt, considered as an abject creature, and permitted to perform only the basest and most menial labor.

The same punishment may, it is true, be inflicted upon a member of any other caste; but by dint of repentance, of fastings and privations, the latter may in time regain their former rank, while the wretched Soudra is forever lost if once expelled from his caste.

It is therefore easy to understand the veneration of the Vaisyas and the Soudras for Jesus, who, notwithstanding the threats of the Brahmans, never abandoned them.

In his sermons, Jesus not only inveighed against the injustice of depriving a man of his right to be considered as such, while a monkey, or a piece of marble and metal was worshiped, but also denounced the main principle of Brahmanism, its system of gods, its doctrine, and its trimourti (trinity), the keystone of this religion.

Para-Brahma is represented with three faces on one single head: This is the trimourti (trinity), composed of Brahma (the creator), Vischnou (the preserver), and Siva (the destroyer).

The origin of the trimourti is as follows:

In the beginning, Para-Brahma created the waters and cast upon them the generating seed, which was transformed into a dazzling egg reflecting the image of Brahma. Millions of centuries later, Brahma divided this egg into two parts, the upper half of which became heaven and the

lower half the earth. This done, Brahma came down upon this earth in the appearance of a child, placed himself on a lotus flower, withdrew within himself and propounded this question: "Who shall watch over the preservation of what I have created?" The answer came from his own mouth as flame: "I," and Brahma gave this word the name of Vischnou, which signifies, "he who preserves." Brahma then divided his being into two halves, one male and the other female, the active world and the passive world, the union of which brought forth Siva, "the destroyer."

The attributes of the trimourti are: Brahma, the creator being; Vischnou, the preserving wisdom; Siva, the destructive wrath of justice. Brahma is the substance from which all things are made; Vischnou, the space in which everything lives; and Siva, time which destroys all things.

Brahma is the face that animates everything; Vischnou, the water that sustains the strength of creatures; Siva, the fire that breaks the links that unite objects. Brahma is the past, Vischnou the present, and Siva the future. Each part of the trimourti, moreover, possesses a wife: That of Brahma is Sarasvati, goddess of wisdom; that of Vischnou is called Lackmi, goddess of virtue;

and Siva is married to Kali, goddess of death, the universal destroyer.

From this last union was born the wise god, Ganega, and Indra, chief of the inferior divinities, the number of which, including all objects of adoration belonging to the Hindoos, comes to three hundred millions.

Vischnou came down upon earth eight times, incarnating himself first in a fish, to save the sacred books from the deluge, then successively in a turtle, a dwarf, a wild boar, a lion, later in Rama — who was a king's son — in Krichna, and finally in Buddha. He will come a ninth time under the form of a cavalier mounted on a white horse, to destroy death and sin.

Jesus denied the existence of all these hierarchal absurdities of gods which obscured the great principle of monotheism.

Seeing that the people were beginning to embrace the doctrines of Jesus, whom they had hoped to gain on their side, and who was now their adversary, the Brahmans resolved to assassinate him; but being warned in time by his devoted servants, he fled and took refuge in the mountains of Nepal.

Buddhism had already taken deep root in this country at that period. This schism was remarkable for its moral principles and ideas on

the nature of the divinity, which brought man and nature, and men among themselves, nearer together.

The founder of the sect, Cakya-Mouni, was born fifteen hundred years before Christ at Kapila, the capital of his father's kingdom, near Nepal in the Himalayas. He belonged to the Gothamide race and to the ancient family of Cakyas. He evinced a strong attachment to religion from childhood, and, notwithstanding his father's objections and disapproval, left the palace in which he lived with all its luxuries. He immediately began to preach against the Brahmans, meanwhile purifying their doctrine. He died at Koucinagara, surrounded by many of his faithful disciples. His body was burned, and his ashes distributed among the cities in which his new doctrine had replaced Brahmanism.

According to the Buddhist doctrine, the Creator always remains in a state of absolute inaction which nothing can disturb, and from which he arouses only at certain epochs determined by fate, in order to create terrestrial Buddhas. To this end, the Spirit is detached from the sovereign Creator and incarnated in a Buddha, in whom it dwells for some time on earth, where it creates buddhissatwas (masters) whose mission it is to preach the divine word and found new

churches of believers, to whom they shall give laws and for whom they will institute a new religious order according to the traditions of Buddhism.

A terrestrial Buddha is, in some sort, a reflection of the sovereign Creator Buddha, to whom he again unites himself after the termination of his existence on earth; so it is with the Buddhissatwas who, as a reward for their works and the privations they have endured here below, receive eternal beatitude and enjoy a repose nothing can disturb.

Jesus spent six years among the Buddhists, where he found the principle of monotheism still in its purity. Having attained the age of twenty-six years he bethought himself of his native country, which labored under a foreign yoke. He therefore resolved to return there. While journeying thither he continued to preach against idolatry, human sacrifices, and religious errors, exhorting the people to acknowledge and adore God, the father of all creatures whom he cherishes equally, the masters as well as the slaves, for they are all his children, to whom he has given his beautiful universe as a common inheritance. The sermons of Jesus often produced a deep impression upon the nations he visited, where he braved many dangers instigated by the

priests, but was as often protected by the idolaters, who, only the day before, had sacrificed their children to the idols.

While crossing Persia, Jesus almost caused an uprising among the followers of the doctrine of Zoroaster. Fearing the vengeance of the people, however, the priests dared not assassinate him, but had recourse to a ruse instead, and drove him from the town during the night, hoping he might be devoured by wild beasts. But Jesus escaped this peril and arrived safe and sound in the land of Israel.

It must be here remarked that the Orientals, in the midst of their picturesque wretchedness and the ocean of depravity in which they have sunk, under the continued influence of their priests and preceptors, possess nevertheless a most pronounced predilection for instruction and readily understand properly applied explanations. More than once, by the aid of some simple words of truth, I have successfully appealed to the conscience of a thief or an unruly servant. These people, moved by a sentiment of innate honesty, which the clergy, to further their own personal ends, endeavor by all possible means to stifle — these people, I repeat, are very quick to learn the principles of honesty, and exhibit the greatest contempt for those who have abused them.

By virtue of a single word of truth, it is possible to make of all India, with its three hundred millions of idols, a vast Christian country; but—this beautiful project would undoubtedly be prejudicial to certain Christians, who, like the aforesaid priests, speculate on the ignorance of the masses to enrich themselves.

Saint Luke says that: "Jesus was about thirty years of age when he began to exercise his ministry." According to the Buddhist chronicler, Jesus would have commenced to preach in his twenty-ninth year. All his sermons, which the Evangelists do not mention and which have been preserved by the Buddhists, are remarkable for their character of divine grandeur. The fame of the new preacher spread rapidly through the country, and Jerusalem impatiently awaited his coming. When he drew near to the holy city, all the inhabitants went forth to meet him and conducted him in triumph to the temple, which is in conformity with the Christian tradition. The chiefs and the learned men who listened, admired his sermons and rejoiced at the beneficent impression produced on the multitude by the words of Jesus. All the remarkable sermons of Jesus are filled with sublime words.

But Pilate, Governor of the country, did not see the matter in the same light. Zealous agents

reported to him that Jesus announced the near approach of a new kingdom, the re-establishment of the throne of Israel, and that he called himself the Son of God, sent to revive the courage of Israel, for he, King of Judea, would soon ascend the throne of his ancestors.

I have no wish to attribute to Jesus the role of revolutionist, but, to me, it seems very probable that he labored with the people with a view of re-establishing the throne that was his by right of inheritance. Divinely inspired, and at the same time fully convinced that his pretensions were legitimate, Jesus therefore preached the spiritual union of the people that a political union might result.

Alarmed at these rumors, Pilate assembled the learned men and the elders of the people, charging them to interdict Jesus from public preaching and condemn him in the temple under the accusation of apostacy. This was the easiest way of ridding himself of a dangerous man whose royal origin was known to Pilate, and whose fame was growing among the people.

It must be remarked on this subject, that far from persecuting Jesus, the Israelites, recognizing in him the descendant of the illustrious dynasty of David, made him the object of their secret hopes, as is proved by the scripture, which relates

that Jesus preached openly in the temple in the presence of the elders, who had the power to prohibit him, not only access to the temple, but even of preaching in public.

At Pilate's order, the Sanhedrim assembled and cited Jesus to appear before its tribunal. At the conclusion of the inquest, the members of the Sanhedrim announced to Pilate that his suspicions were groundless, that Jesus was propagating religious truths, and not political ideas; that he preached the divine word, and that, furthermore, he claimed to have come, not to overthrow, but to re-establish the laws of Moses. The Buddhist chronicle only tends to confirm this sympathy which indubitably existed between Jesus, the young preacher, and the elders of the people of Israel; hence their response: "We do not judge a just man."

Pilate was not reassured, however, and sought another opportunity of summoning Jesus before a regular tribunal; to this end, he sent many spies to watch him, and he was at length apprehended.

According to the Evangelists, it was the Pharisees and the Hebrews who sought to put Jesus to death, while the Buddhist chronicler positively declares that Pilate alone must be held responsible. This version is evidently much more likely than the account given by the Evangelists;

the conquerors of Judea being unable to long tolerate the presence of a man who announced to the people their near deliverance from the foreign yoke. The popularity of Jesus having proved disquieting to Pilate, it was but natural that he should dispatch spies with instructions to watch every word and action of the young preacher. In their character of inciting agents, these spies endeavored, by propounding embarrassing questions to Jesus, to force him to utter some imprudent words that might permit Pilate to proceed against him. Had Jesus' preaching displeased the wise men and Hebrew priests, they would simply have ordered the people not to listen to him or follow him, and have interdicted him entering the temple. The Evangelists, however, relate that Jesus enjoyed great freedom among the Israelites and in the temple, where Pharisees and learned men conversed with him.

That he might succeed in condemning him, Pilate submitted him to inquisition, hoping to drive him to an avowal of high treason.

Seeing that tortures did not bring about the desired result, and that, unlike other innocent persons put to the same suffering and agony, Jesus did not falter and accuse himself, Pilate commanded his servants to proceed to the utmost cruelty, that his death might be brought about by

exhaustion. Jesus, however, finding a source of strength and courage in his own will and in his confidence in his cause, which was that of the nation and of God himself, opposed an unflinching endurance to all the refinements of cruelty received at the hands of his torturers.

Jesus having undergone the secret inquisition, the elders were much displeased thereat; they therefore resolved to intercede in his favor and ask that he be set at liberty before the feast of the Passover.

Foiled in the object of their demand by Pilate, they determined to insist upon having him brought before the tribunal, so certain were they of his acquittal, which seemed fully assured since the entire people ardently desired it.

In the eyes of the priests, Jesus was a saint belonging to the house of David, and his unjust detention, or what was still more grave, his condemnation, would cast a deep gloom upon the solemnity of the great national feast of the Israelites.

On learning of the refusal of their demand, they begged that the trial should take place before the feast. This time Pilate acceded to their wishes, but also ordered that two thieves should be tried at the same time. By this means Pilate strove to belittle, in the eyes of the people, the importance that might be attached to a judg-

ment rendered against an innocent man if he were tried alone, thus leaving the nation under the sad impression of a verdict dictated beforehand; while, on the contrary, the simultaneous condemnation of Jesus and the two thieves would almost efface the injustice committed against one of the accused.

The accusation was based upon the depositions of hired witnesses.

During the trial, Pilate used the words of Jesus, who preached the Kingdom of Heaven, to justify the accusation against him. He counted, it would seem, upon the effect produced by the replies of Jesus, as well as on his own personal authority to influence the members of the tribunal to not examine too minutely the details of the case before them to obtain the desired verdict.

After hearing the perfectly natural reply of the judges, that the words of Jesus only proved a sentiment diametrically opposed to the accusation, and that he could not be condemned thereon, Pilate had recourse to the only means left him, that is, to the deposition of an informer, who, in the Governor's judgment, could not fail to produce a deep impression on the judges. The wretch, who was none other than Judas, then formally accused Jesus of having incited the people to rebellion.

Then followed a scene of the grandest sublimity. While Judas gave utterance to his testimony, Jesus turned to him, and, having blessed him, said: "Thou shalt be forgiven, for what thou sayest cometh not of thee." Then turning to the Governor, he continued: "Why lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to live in falsehood, since, even without this, thou hast the power to condemn an innocent man?"

Touching and sublime words! Jesus Christ manifests himself in all his grandeur, first in showing the informer that he has sold his conscience, then in forgiving him; turning next to Pilate, he censured him for having recourse to proceedings so degrading to his dignity to obtain his condemnation.

The accusation brought by Jesus against Pilate, caused the latter to completely forget his position and the prudence he should display; he therefore imperiously demanded the condemnation of Jesus at the hands of the judges, and, as if to assert the unlimited power he enjoyed, the acquittal of the two thieves.

Finding this demand to discharge the two thieves and condemn Jesus, though innocent, too unjust to comply with, the judges refused to commit this double crime against their conscience and their laws; but being too weak to struggle

against a man who had the power to give a final verdict, and seeing him determined to rid himself of a person who rivaled the Roman authorities, they left him to pronounce the judgment he so ardently desired. That they might not be censured by the people, who could not have forgiven so unjust a judgment, they washed their hands as they came out of the tribunal chamber, showing thereby that they were innocent of the death of Jesus, whom the multitude adored.

About ten years ago I read an article on Judas in a German journal, the *Fremdenblatt*, in which the author endeavored to show that the informer had been Jesus' best friend. It would seem that it was through love for his master that Judas betrayed him, in his blind belief in the words of the Savior, who said that his kingdom would come after his crucifixion. But when he beheld him on the cross, after vainly awaiting his immediate resurrection, Judas found himself incapable of bearing his remorse and hanged himself.

It is useless to elaborate on this lucubration, which is certainly original.

But to return to the scriptural narrative and the Buddhist chronicle, it seems quite probable that the hired informer may have been Judas, although the Buddhist version is silent on this point. As to the theory that remorse of con-

science drove the informer to the taking of his own life, I place little credence in it. A man capable of committing an act of such cowardice and of bringing against any one of his fellow-men an accusation so notoriously false, and that, not from a spirit of envy or revenge, but for a mere handful of silver, such a man, I repeat, is psychologically worthless. He is ignorant of all idea of honesty or conscience, and remorse is unknown to him.

It is to be presumed that the Governor took this matter into his own hands, as is sometimes done in our days, when it is imperative to keep from the people a grave and compromising secret which such a man might easily betray without heeding the consequences. Judas was no doubt hanged forthwith to prevent him from ever revealing that the testimony on which Jesus was condemned emanated from the Governor himself.

On the day of the crucifixion, a large body of Roman soldiers was stationed about the cross to prevent the people from rescuing the object of their worship. In this circumstance, Pilate displayed extraordinary firmness and resolution. But though, owing to his precautions, an uprising was averted, he could not prevent the people from weeping over the downfall of their hopes, which died with the last descendant of the house

of David. The entire population went to adore the tomb of Jesus, and though we have no precise details of the first days after the Passion, we may easily imagine the scenes that must have taken place. It is only reasonable to suppose that the prudent lieutenant of the Roman Cæsar, seeing that the tomb of Jesus was becoming a shrine of universal lamentations and the object of national mourning, and fearing that the memory of this just man might excite discontent and perhaps arouse the entire population against their foreign yoke, should have taken all possible means to divert the public mind from the recollection of Jesus. For three days, the soldiers placed on guard at the tomb were the butt of the jeers and maledictions of the people, who, braving the danger, came in throngs to adore the great martyr. Pilate therefore ordered his soldiers to remove the body during the night, when the pilgrimages had ceased, and inter it clandestinely in another place, leaving the first tomb open and unguarded, that the people might see that Jesus had disappeared.

But Pilate failed to accomplish this end; for, on the following day, not finding the body of their master in the sepulcher, the Hebrews, who were very superstitious and believed in miracles, declared him resuscitated.

How this legend came to be generally accepted, we know not. It may have existed for a long time in a latent state and been first spread among the lower classes; or, perhaps, the Hebrew ecclesiastics looked with indulgence upon this innocent belief which gave to the oppressed a shadow of revenge against their oppressors. However this may be, since the day this legend of the resurrection became known to all, no one has had the strength of mind to point out the impossibility of it.

As concerns the resurrection itself, it must be remarked that, according to the Buddhists, the soul of the just man was united to the Eternal Being, while the Evangelists strongly insist upon the ascension of the body. It nevertheless seems to me, that the Evangelists and Apostles were wise in giving a plastic description of the resurrection; for otherwise, that is to say, had the miracle been less material, their sermons would not have been stamped, in the eyes of the people, with that divine authority, that character so manifestly divine which christianity retains to this day, as being the only religion capable of maintaining the people in a state of sublime enthusiasm, of softening their savage instincts, and of bringing them nearer to the great and simple nature which God has confided, it is said, to the feeble dwarf called man.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

CHAPTER III.

§§ 3, 4, 5, 7.

THE history of all people shows that when a nation has attained the zenith of its riches and military glory, it almost immediately begins to slide more or less rapidly down the hill of decay and of moral decline. The Israelites were the first to undergo this law of the evolution of nations; and the neighboring countries took advantage of this to attack the effeminated and corrupted descendants of Jacob.

§ 8.

The country of Romeles — that is, the land of Romulus, or Rome, as it is called in our days.

§§ 11, 12.

It is evident that the Israelites, notwithstanding their incontestable genius and intelligence, never seemed to think of the morrow. Like all other oriental nations, it was only in their days of misfortune that they remem-

bered their past sins, which they were each time obliged to redeem by centuries of slavery.

CHAPTER IV.

§ 6.

This verse, it is readily seen, refers to Joseph, who was a direct descendant of King David. This somewhat vague assertion bears some analogy to the following scriptural verses:

"Behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife."—(Gospel according to St. Matthew i, 20.)

"And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David!"—(Gospel according to St. Matthew xxi, 9.)

"To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David."—(Gospel according to St. Luke i, 27.)

"And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David."—(Gospel according to St. Luke i, 32.)

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David."—(Gospel according to St. Luke iii, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, etc.)

§ 7.

The Old and New Testaments teach us that God promised David that he would regenerate his throne and place one of his descendants upon it.

§§ 8, 9.

"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him."

"And it came to pass, that after three days, they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." (Gospel according to St. Luke ii, 40, 46, 47, 49, 52.)

CHAPTER V.

§ 1.

"Sind," a Sanscrit word, modified by the Persians into Ind; "Arya," ancient name of the inhabitants of India; it first signified "man who ploughs the soil," or

"husbandman;" in remote antiquity it possessed a purely ethnographic signification; but later, this appellation acquired a religious meaning, principally that of "man who believes."

§ 2.

St. Luke says (i, 80): "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert till the day of his shewing unto Israel." The Evangelists say that Jesus remained in the desert; the Buddhists only explain the version of the scripture in indicating where Jesus lived during his absence from Judea; according to them, he crossed the Sind, a word which, properly speaking means "the stream" (the Indus). It is proper here to remark that many Sanscrit words have, in passing into the Persian tongue, undergone the same transformation of "s" into "h"; as for example:

Sapta (in Sanscrit), which signifies seven — hafta (in Persian).

Sam (in Sanscrit), which signifies equal — ham (in Persian).

Mas (in Sanscrit), which signifies mouth — mah (in Persian).

Sur (in Sanscrit), which signifies sun — hur (in Persian).

Das (in Sanscrit), which signifies ten — dah (in Persian).

Loco citato — and they that believed in the god Djaine.

There exists, even in our days, in the Peninsula of Hindoostan, a sect bearing the name of Djainism; it forms, as it were, a link between Buddhism and Brahmanism, and preaches the destruction of all other beliefs which, it is claimed, are impregnated with errors. It dates back to the seventh century before Christ; its name is derived from the word "Djaine" (conqueror), which it assumes as a symbol of triumph over its rivals.

§ 4.

Each of the eighteen Pouranas is divided into five parts, which, besides canonical laws, rites, and commentaries on the creation, the destruction, and resuscitation of the world, also treat of theogony, medicine, and of trades even.

CHAPTER VI.

§ 12.

It was only through the intervention of the English that an end was finally put to human sacrifices, offered principally to Kali, the goddess of death. The goddess Kali is represented standing, with one foot placed on the corpse of a man whose head she holds in one of her innumerable hands, while in another she grasps a bleeding sword. The wide-open mouth and eyes express passion and cruelty.

CHAPTER VIII.

§§ 3, 4.

Zoroaster lived five hundred and fifty years before Jesus Christ. He was founder of the doctrine of the struggle of light against darkness, a doctrine fully expounded in the Zend-Avesta (Word of God), written in the Zend tongue, and which, according to the legend, was given him by an angel in Paradise.

According to Zoroaster, we should worship Mithra (the sun), from which are descended the god of good, Ormuzd, and the god of evil, Ariman. The world is to come to an end when Ormuzd has triumphed over his rival, Ariman, who shall then return to his original source — Mithra.

CHAPTER X.

§ 16.

According to the Evangelists, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which confirms the Buddhist version; for it is from Bethlehem only, seven kilometers from Jerusalem, that the walls of the latter city can be seen.

CHAPTER XI.

§ 15.

The doctrine of the Redemptor is nearly all contained

in the Gospels. As to the transformation of men into children, this is explained in the conversation between Jesus and Nicodemus.

CHAPTER XII.

§ 1.

"Tell us, therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" (Gospel according to St. Matthew xxii, 17).

§ 3.

Then Jesus replied: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's."

CHAPTER XIV.

§ 3.

According to the Buddhist belief, the terrestrial Buddhas at their death lose consciousness of their independent existence and become united to the Eternal Spirit.

§§ 10, 11.

Reference is, no doubt, here made to the apostles and their activity among the neighboring nations; an activity which, at that period, could not pass unperceived,

because of the great results obtained by the preaching of new religious principles based on brotherly love, in the midst of people who professed religions founded on the cruelty of their gods.

Without permitting myself to indulge in long dissertations, or too deep analysis of each verse, I thought it only right to accompany my work with a few brief explanatory notes, leaving the reader to do as much for the remainder.

[END.]

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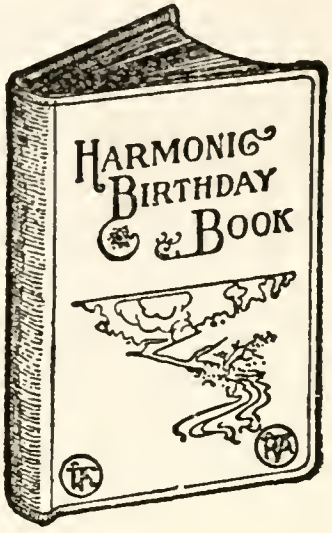

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THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST

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goes this unusually
interesting and now
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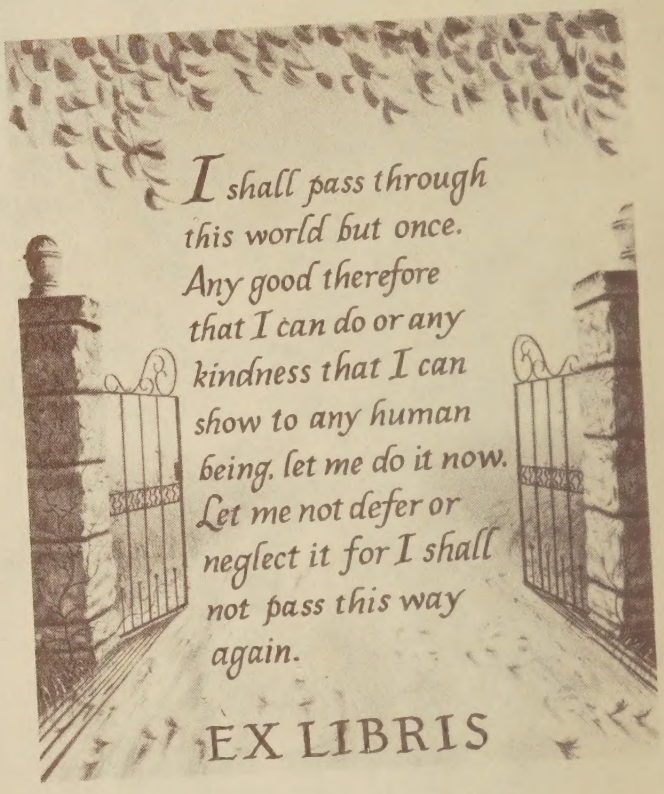
1937.


I shall pass through
this world but once.
Any good therefore
that I can do or any
kindness that I can
show to any human
being. let me do it now.
Let me not defer or
neglect it for I shall
not pass this way
again.
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Marie

THE UNKNOWN LIFE

OF

JESUS CHRIST,

FROM BUDDHISTIC RECORDS,

BY

NICOLAS NOTOVITCH.

TRANSLATED BY

J. H. CONNELLY AND L. LANDSBERG.

NEW YORK:

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Marie

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PREFACE.

After the Turkish War (1877–1878) I made a series of travels in the Orient. From the little remarkable Balkan peninsula, I went across the Caucasus to Central Asia and Persia, and finally, in 1887, visited India, an admirable country which had attracted me from my earliest childhood. My purpose in this journey was to study and know, at home, the peoples who inhabit India and their customs, the grand and mysterious archæology, and the colossal and majestic nature of their country. Wandering about without fixed plans, from one place to another, I came to

mountainous Afghanistan, whence I regained India by way of the picturesque passes of Bolan and Guernaï. Then, going up the Indus to Raval Pindi, I ran over the Pendjab —the land of the five rivers; visited the Golden Temple of Amritsa—the tomb of the King of Pendjab, Randjid Singh, near Lahore; and turned toward Kachmyr, "The Valley of Eternal Bliss." Thence I directed my peregrinations as my curiosity impelled me, until I arrived in Ladak, whence I intended returning to Russia by way of Karakoroum and Chinese Turkestan.

One day, while visiting a Bhuddist convent on my route, I learned from a chief lama, that there existed in the archives of Lhassa, very ancient memoirs relating to the life of Jesus Christ and the occidental nations, and that certain great monasteries

possessed old copies and translations of those chronicles.

As it was little probable that I should make another journey into this country, I resolved to put off my return to Europe until a later date, and, cost what it might, either find those copies in the great convents or go to Lhassa —a journey which is far from being so dangerous and difficult as is generally supposed, involving only such perils as I was already accustomed to, and which would not make me hesitate at attempting it.

During my sojourn at Leh, capital of Ladak, I visited the great convent Himis, situated near the city, the chief lama of which informed me that their monastic library contained copies of the manuscripts in question. In order that I might not awaken the suspicions of the authorities con-

cerning the object of my visit to the cloister, and to evade obstacles which might be opposed to me as a Russian, prosecuting further my journey in Thibet, I gave out upon my return to Leh that I would depart for India, and so left the capital of Ladak. An unfortunate fall, causing the breaking of a leg, furnished me with an absolutely unexpected pretext for returning to the monastery, where I received surgical attention. I took advantage of my short sojourn among the lamas to obtain the consent of their chief that they should bring to me, from their library, the manuscripts relating to Jesus Christ, and, assisted by my interpreter, who translated for me the Thibetan language, transferred carefully to my note-book what the lama read to me.

Not doubting at all the authenticity of this

chronicle, edited with great exactitude by the Brahminic, and more especially the Buddhistic historians of India and Nepaul, I desired, upon my return to Europe, to publish a translation of it.

To this end, I addressed myself to several universally known ecclesiastics, asking them to revise my notes and tell me what they thought of them.

Mgr. Platon, the celebrated metropolitan of Kiew, thought that my discovery was of great importance. Nevertheless, he sought to dissuade me from publishing the memoirs, believing that their publication could only hurt me. "Why?" This the venerable prelate refused to tell me more explicitly. Nevertheless, since our conversation took place in Russia, where the censor would

have put his veto upon such a work, I made up my mind to wait.

A year later, I found myself in Rome. I showed my manuscript to a cardinal very near to the Holy Father, who answered me literally in these words:—"What good will it do to print this? Nobody will attach to it any great importance and you will create a number of enemies. But, you are still very young! If it is a question of money which concerns you, I can ask for you a reward for your notes, a sum which will repay your expenditures and recompense you for your loss of time." Of course, I refused.

In Paris I spoke of my project to Cardinal Rotelli, whose acquaintance I had made in Constantinople. He, too, was opposed to having my work printed, under the pretext that it would be premature. "The church,"

he added, "suffers already too much from the new current of atheistic ideas, and you will but give a new food to the calumniators and detractors of the evangelical doctrine. I tell you this in the interest of all the Christian churches."

Then I went to see M. Jules Simon. He found my matter very interesting and advised me to ask the opinion of M. Renan, as to the best way of publishing these memoirs. The next day I was seated in the cabinet of the great philosopher. At the close of our conversation, M. Renan proposed that I should confide to him the memoirs in question, so that he might make to the Academy a report upon the discovery.

This proposition, as may be easily understood, was very alluring and flattering to my *amour propre*. I, however, took away with

me the manuscript, under the pretext of further revising it. I foresaw that if I accepted the proposed combination, I would only have the honor of having found the chronicles, while the illustrious author of the "Life of Jesus" would have the glory of the publication and the commenting upon it. I thought myself sufficiently prepared to publish the translation of the chronicles, accompanying them with my notes, and, therefore, did not accept the very gracious offer he made to me. But, that I might not wound the susceptibility of the great master, for whom I felt a profound respect, I made up my mind to delay publication until after his death, a fatality which could not be far off, if I might judge from the apparent general weakness of M. Renan. A short time after M. Renan's death, I wrote to M. Jules Simon again for

his advice. He answered me, that it was my affair to judge of the opportunity for making the memoirs public.

I therefore put my notes in order and now publish them, reserving the right to substantiate the authenticity of these chronicles. In my commentaries I proffer the arguments which must convince us of the sincerity and good faith of the Buddhist compilers. I wish to add that before criticising my communication, the societies of *savans* can, without much expense, equip a scientific expedition having for its mission the study of those manuscripts in the place where I discovered them, and so may easily verify their historic value.

NICOLAS NOTOVITCH.

THE UNKNOWN LIFE OF JESUS CHRIST.

A JOURNEY IN THIBET.

During my sojourn in India, I often had occasion to converse with the Buddhists, and the accounts they gave me of Thibet excited my curiosity to such an extent that I resolved to make a journey into that still almost unknown country. For this purpose I set out upon a route crossing Kachmyr (Cashmere), which I had long intended to visit.

On the 14th of October, 1887, I entered a railway car crowded with soldiers, and went from Lahore to Raval-Pindi, where I arrived the next day, near noon. After resting a little and inspecting the city, to which the permanent garrison gives the aspect of a military camp, I provided myself with the necessaries for a journey, where horses take the place of the railway cars. Assisted by my servant, a colored man of Pondichery, I packed all my baggage, hired a tonga (a two-wheeled vehicle which is drawn by two horses), stowed myself upon its back seat, and set out upon the picturesque road leading to Kachmyr, an excellent highway, upon which we travelled rapidly. We had to use no little skill in making our way through the ranks of a military caravan—its baggage carried upon camels—which was part of a de-

tachment returning from a country camp to the city. Soon we arrived at the end of the valley of Pendjab, and climbing up a way with infinite windings, entered the passes of the Himalayas. The ascent became more and more steep. Behind us spread, like a beautiful panorama, the region we had just traversed, which seemed to sink farther and farther away from us. As the sun's last glances rested upon the tops of the mountains, our tonga came gaily out from the zigzags which the eye could still trace far down the forest-clad slope, and halted at the little city of Muré; where the families of the English functionaries come to seek shade and refreshment.

Ordinarily, one can go in a tonga from Muré to Srinagar; but at the approach of the winter season, when all Europeans desert

Kachmyr, the tonga service is suspended. I undertook my journey precisely at the time when the summer life begins to wane, and the Englishmen whom I met upon the road, returning to India, were much astonished to see me, and made vain efforts to divine the purpose of my travel to Kachmyr.

Abandoning the tonga, I hired saddle-horses —not without considerable difficulty—and evening had arrived when we started to descend from Muré, which is at an altitude of 5,000 feet. This stage of our journey had nothing playful in it. The road was torn in deep ruts by the late rains, darkness came upon us and our horses rather guessed than saw their way. When night had completely set in, a tempestuous rain surprised us in the open country, and, owing to the thick foliage of the centennarian oaks which stood on the

sides of our road, we were plunged in profound darkness. That we might not lose each other, we had to continue exchanging calls from time to time. In this impenetrable obscurity we divined huge masses of rock almost above our heads, and were conscious of, on our left, a roaring torrent, the waters of which formed a cascade we could not see. During two hours we waded in the mud and the icy rain had chilled my very marrow, when we perceived in the distance a little fire, the sight of which revived our energies. But how deceitful are lights in the mountains! You believe you see the fire burning quite near to you and at once it disappears, to re-appear again, to the right, to the left, above, below you, as if it took pleasure in playing tricks upon the harassed traveller. All the time the road makes a thousand turns,

and winds here and there, and the fire—which is immovable—seems to be in continual motion, the obscurity preventing you realizing that you yourself modify your direction every instant.

I had quite given up all hope of approaching this much-wished-for fire, when it appeared again, and this time so near that our horses stopped before it.

I have here to express my sincere thanks to the Englishmen for the foresight of which they gave proof in building by the road-sides the little bengalows—one-story houses for the shelter of travellers. It is true, one must not demand comfort in this kind of hotel; but this is a matter in which the traveller, broken down by fatigue, is not exacting, and he is at the summit of happiness when he finds at his disposal a clean and dry room.

The Hindus, no doubt, did not expect to see a traveller arrive at so late an hour of the night and in this season, for they had taken away the keys of the bengalow, so we had to force an entrance. I threw myself upon a bed prepared for me, composed of a pillow and blanket saturated with water, and almost at once fell asleep. At daybreak, after taking tea and some conserves, we took up our march again, now bathed in the burning rays of the sun. From time to time, we passed villages; the first in a superb narrow pass, then along the road meandering in the bosom of the mountain. We descended eventually to the river Djeloum (Jhelum), the waters of which flow gracefully, amid the rocks by which its course is obstructed, between rocky walls whose tops in many places seem almost to reach the azure skies of the Himalayas, a

heaven which here shows itself remarkably pure and serene.

Toward noon we arrived at the hamlet called Tongue—situated on the bank of the river—which presents an unique array of huts that give the effect of boxes, the openings of which form a façade. Here are sold comestibles and all kinds of merchandise. The place swarms with Hindus, who bear on their foreheads the variously colored marks of their respective castes. Here, too, you see the beautiful people of Kachmyr, dressed in their long white shirts and snowy turbans. I hired here, at a good price, a Hindu cabriolet, from a Kachmyrian. This vehicle is so constructed that in order to keep one's seat in it, one must cross his legs in the Turkish fashion. The seat is so small that it will hold, at most, only two persons. The ab-

sence of any support for the back makes this mode of transportation very dangerous; nevertheless, I accepted this kind of circular table mounted on two wheels and drawn by a horse, as I was anxious to reach, as soon as possible, the end of my journey. Hardly, however, had I gone five hundred yards on it, when I seriously regretted the horse I had forsaken, so much fatigue had I to endure keeping my legs crossed and maintaining my equilibrium. Unfortunately, it was already too late.

Evening was falling when I approached the village of Hori. Exhausted by fatigue; racked by the incessant jolting; my legs feeling as if invaded by millions of ants, I had been completely incapable of enjoying the picturesque landscape spread before us as we journeyed along the Djeloum, the banks of which

are bordered on one side by steep rocks and on the other by the heavily wooded slopes of mountains. In Hori I encountered a caravan of pilgrims returning from Mecca.

Thinking I was a physician and learning my haste to reach Ladak, they invited me to join them, which I promised them I would at Srinagar.

I spent an ill night, sitting up in my bed, with a lighted torch in my hand, without closing my eyes, in constant fear of the stings and bites of the scorpions and centipedes which swarm in the bengalows. I was sometimes ashamed of the fear with which those vermin inspired me; nevertheless, I could not fall asleep among them. Where, truly, in man, is the line that separates courage from cowardice? I will not boast of my bravery, but I am not a coward, yet the insurmount-

able fear with which those malevolent little creatures thrilled me, drove sleep from my eyelids, in spite of my extreme fatigue.

Our horses carried us into a flat valley, encircled by high mountains. Bathed as I was in the rays of the sun, it did not take me long to fall asleep in the saddle. A sudden sense of freshness penetrated and awoke me. I saw that we had already begun climbing a mountain path, in the midst of a dense forest, rifts in which occasionally opened to our admiring gaze ravishing vistas, impetuous torrents; distant mountains; cloudless heavens; a landscape, far below, of wondrous beauty. All about us were the songs of numberless brilliantly plumaged birds. We came out of the forest toward noon, descended to a little hamlet on the bank of the river, and after refreshing ourselves with a

light, cold collation, continued our journey. Before starting, I went to a bazaar and tried to buy there a glass of warm milk from a Hindu, who was sitting crouched before a large cauldron full of boiling milk. How great was my surprise when he proposed to me that I should take away the whole cauldron, with its contents, assuring me that I had polluted the milk it contained! "I only want a glass of milk and not a kettle of it," I said to him.

"According to our laws," the merchant answered me, "if any one not belonging to our caste has fixed his eyes for a long time upon one of our cooking utensils, we have to wash that article thoroughly, and throw away the food it contains. You have polluted my milk and no one will drink any more of it, for not only were you not con-

tented with fixing your eyes upon it, but you have even pointed to it with your finger."

I had indeed a long time examined his merchandise, to make sure that it was really milk, and had pointed with my finger, to the merchant, from which side I wished the milk poured out. Full of respect for the laws and customs of foreign peoples, I paid, without dispute, a rupee, the price of all the milk, which was poured in the street, though I had taken only one glass of it. This was a lesson which taught me, from now on, not to fix my eyes upon the food of the Hindus.

There is no religious belief more muddled by the numbers of ceremonious laws and commentaries prescribing its observances than the Brahminic.

While each of the other principal religions has but one inspired book, one Bible, one

Gospel, or one Koran—books from which the Hebrew, the Christian and the Musselman draw their creeds—the Brahminical Hindus possess such a great number of tomes and commentaries in folio that the wisest Brahmin has hardly had the time to peruse one-tenth of them. Leaving aside the four books of the Vedas; the Puranas—which are written in Sanscrit and composed of eighteen volumes—containing 400,000 strophes treating of law, rights, theogony, medicine, the creation and destruction of the world, etc.; the vast Shastras, which deal with mathematics, grammar, etc.; the Upa-Vedas, Upanishads, Upo-Puranas—which are explanatory of the Puranas;—and a number of other commentaries in several volumes; there still remain twelve vast books, containing the laws of Manu, the grandchild of Brahma—books deal-

ing not only with civil and criminal law, but also the canonical rules—rules which impose upon the faithful such a considerable number of ceremonies that one is surprised into admiration of the illimitable patience the Hindus show in observance of the precepts inculcated by Saint Manu. Manu was incontestably a great legislator and a great thinker, but he has written so much that it has happened to him frequently to contradict himself in the course of a single page. The Brahmins do not take the trouble to notice that, and the poor Hindus, whose labor supports the Brahminic caste, obey servilely their clergy, whose prescriptions enjoin upon them never to touch a man who does not belong to their caste, and also absolutely prohibit a stranger from fixing his attention upon anything belonging to a Hindu. Keeping himself to

the strict letter of this law, the Hindu imagines that his food is polluted when it receives a little protracted notice from the stranger.

And yet, Brahminism has been, even at the beginning of its second birth, a purely monotheistic religion, recognizing only one infinite and indivisible God. As it came to pass in all times and in all religions, the clergy took advantage of the privileged situation which places them above the ignorant multitude, and early manufactured various exterior forms of cult and certain laws, thinking they could better, in this way, influence and control the masses. Things changed soon, so far that the principle of monotheism, of which the Vedas have given such a clear conception, became confounded with, or, as it were, supplanted by an absurd

and limitless series of gods and goddesses, half-gods, genii and devils, which were represented by idols, of infinite variety but all equally horrible-looking. The people, once glorious as their religion was once great and pure, now slip by degrees into complete idiocy. Hardly does their day suffice for the accomplishment of all the prescriptions of their canons. It must be said positively that the Hindus only exist to support their principal caste, the Brahmins, who have taken into their hands the temporal power which once was possessed by independent sovereigns of the people. While governing India, the Englishman does not interfere with this phase of the public life, and so the Brahmins profit by maintaining the people's hope of a better future.

The sun passed behind the summit of a

mountain, and the darkness of night in one moment overspread the magnificent landscape we were traversing. Soon the narrow valley of the Djeloum fell asleep. Our road winding along ledges of steep rocks, was instantly hidden from our sight; mountains and trees were confounded together in one dark mass, and the stars glittered in the celestial vault. We had to dismount and feel our way along the mountain side, for fear of becoming the prey of the abyss which yawned at our feet. At a late hour of the night we traversed a bridge and ascended a steep elevation leading to the bengalow Ouri, which at this height seems to enjoy complete isolation. The next day we traversed a charming region, always going along the river—at a turn of which we saw the ruins of a Sikh fortress, that seemed to

remember sadly its glorious past. In a little valley, nestled amid the mountains, we found a bengalow which seemed to welcome us. In its proximity were encamped a cavalry regiment of the Maharajah of Kachmyr.

When the officers learned that I was a Russian, they invited me to share their repast. There I had the pleasure of making the acquaintance of Col. Brown, who was the first to compile a dictionary of the Afghan-pouchton language.

As I was anxious to reach, as soon as possible, the city of Srinagar, I, with little delay, continued my journey through the picturesque region lying at the foot of the mountains, after having, for a long time, followed the course of the river. Here, before our eyes, weary of the monotonous desolation of the preceding landscapes, was unfolded a

charming view of a well-peopled valley, with many two-story houses surrounded by gardens and cultivated fields. A little farther on begins the celebrated valley of Kachmyr, situated behind a range of high rocks which I crossed toward evening. What a superb panorama revealed itself before my eyes, when I found myself at the last rock which separates the valley of Kachmyr from the mountainous country I had traversed. A ravishing tableau truly enchanted my sight. This valley, the limits of which are lost in the horizon, and is throughout well populated, is enshrined amid the high Himalayan mountains. At the rising and the setting of the sun, the zone of eternal snows seems a silver ring, which like a girdle surrounds this rich and delightful plateau, furrowed by numerous rivers and traversed by excellent roads.

Gardens, hills, a lake, the islands in which are occupied by constructions of pretentious style, all these cause the traveller to feel as if he had entered another world. It seems to him as though he had to go but a little farther on and there must find the Paradise of which his governess had told him so often in his childhood.

The veil of night slowly covered the valley, merging mountains, gardens and lake in one dark amplitude, pierced here and there by distant fires, resembling stars. I descended into the valley, directing myself toward the Djeloum, which has broken its way through a narrow gorge in the mountains, to unite itself with the waters of the river Ind. According to the legend, the valley was once an inland sea; a passage opened through the rocks environing it, and drained the waters

away, leaving nothing more of its former character than the lake, the Djeloum and minor water-courses. The banks of the river are now lined with boat-houses, long and narrow, which the proprietors, with their families, inhabit the whole year.

From here Srinagar can be reached in one day's travel on horseback; but with a boat the journey requires a day and a half. I chose the latter mode of conveyance, and having selected a boat and bargained with its proprietor for its hire, took my seat in the bow, upon a carpet, sheltered by a sort of penthouse roof. The boat left the shore at midnight, bearing us rapidly toward Srinagar. At the stern of the bark, a Hindu prepared my tea. I went to sleep, happy in knowing my voyage was to be accomplished. The hot caress of the sun's rays penetrating

beneath my little roof awakened me, and what I experienced delighted me beyond all expression. Entirely green banks; the distant outlines of mountain tops covered with snow; pretty villages which from time to time showed themselves at the mountain's foot; the crystalline sheet of water; pure and peculiarly agreeable air, which I breathed with exhilaration; the musical carols of an infinity of birds; a sky of extraordinary purity; behind me the plash of water stirred by the round-ended paddle which was wielded with ease by a superb woman (with marvellous eyes and a complexion browned by the sun), who wore an air of stately indifference: all these things together seemed to plunge me into an ecstasy, and I forgot entirely the reason for my presence on the river. In that moment I had not even a

desire to reach the end of my voyage—and yet, how many privations remained for me to undergo, and dangers to encounter! I felt myself here so well content!

The boat glided rapidly and the landscape continued to unfold new beauties before my eyes, losing itself in ever new combinations with the horizon, which merged into the mountains we were passing, to become one with them. Then a new panorama would display itself, seeming to expand and flow out from the sides of the mountains, becoming more and more grand. . . . The day was almost spent and I was not yet weary of contemplating this magnificent nature, the view of which reawakened the souvenirs of childhood and youth. How beautiful were those days forever gone!

The more nearly one approaches Srinagar,

the more numerous become the villages embowered in the verdure. At the approach of our boat, some of their inhabitants came running to see us; the men in their turbans, the women in their small bonnets, both alike dressed in white gowns reaching to the ground, the children in a state of nudity which reminded one of the costumes of our first parents.

When entering the city one sees a range of barks and floating houses in which entire families reside. The tops of the far-off, snow-covered mountains were caressed by the last rays of the setting sun, when we glided between the wooden houses of Srinagar, which closely line both banks of the river. Life seems to cease here at sunset; the thousands of many-colored open boats (dunga) and palanquin-covered barks (bangla) were

fastened along the beach; men and women gathered near the river, in the primitive costumes of Adam and Eve, going through their evening ablutions without feeling any embarrassment or prudery before each other, since they performed a religious rite, the importance of which is greater for them than all human prejudices.

On the 20th of October I awoke in a neat room, from which I had a gay view upon the river that was now innundated with the rays of the sun of Kachmyr. As it is not my purpose to describe here my experiences in detail, I refrain from enumerating the lovely valleys, the paradise of lakes, the enchanting islands, those historic palaces, mysterious pagodas, and coquettish villages which seem lost in vast gardens; on all sides of which rise the majestic tops of the giants of the

Himalaya, shrouded as far as the eye can see in eternal snow. I shall only note the preparations I made in view of my journey toward Thibet. I spent six days at Srinagar, making long excursions into the enchanting surroundings of the city, examining the numerous ruins which testify to the ancient prosperity of this region, and studying the strange customs of the country.

Kachmyr, as well as the other provinces attached to it, Baltistan, Ladak, etc., are vassals of England. They formerly formed part of the possessions of Randjid Sing, the Lion of the Pendjab. At his death, the English troops occupied Lahore, the capital of the Pendjab, separated Kachmyr from the rest of the empire and ceded it, under color of hereditary right and for the sum of 160,000,000

francs, to Goulab-Sing, one of the familiars of the late sovereign, conferring on him besides the title of Maharadja. At the epoch of my journey, the actual Maharadja was Pertab-Sing, the grandchild of Goulab, whose residence is Jamoo, on the southern slope of the Himalaya.

The celebrated "happy valley" of Kachmyr (eighty-five miles long by twenty-five miles wide) enjoyed glory and prosperity only under the Grand Mogul, whose court loved to taste here the sweetness of country life, in the still existent pavilions on the little island of the lake. Most of the Maharadjas of Hindustan used formerly to spend here the summer months, and to take part in the magnificent festivals given by the Grand Mogul; but times have greatly changed since, and the happy valley is to-day no more than

a beggar-retreat. Aquatic plants and scum have covered the clear waters of the lake; the wild juniper has smothered all the vegetation of the islands; the palaces and pavilions retain only the souvenir of their past grandeur; earth and grass cover the buildings which are now falling in ruins. The surrounding mountains and their eternally white tops seem to be absorbed in a sullen sadness, and to nourish the hope of a better time for the disclosure of their immortal beauties. The once spiritual, beautiful and cleanly inhabitants have grown animalistic and stupid; they have become dirty and lazy; and the whip now governs them, instead of the sword.

The people of Kachmyr have so often been subject to invasions and pillages and have had so many masters, that they have now

become indifferent to every thing. They pass their time near the banks of the rivers, gossiping about their neighbors; or are engaged in the painstaking work of making their celebrated shawls; or in the execution of filagree gold or silver work. The Kachmyr women are of a melancholy temperament, and an inconceivable sadness is spread upon their features. Everywhere reigns misery and uncleanness. The beautiful men and superb women of Kachmyr are dirty and in rags. The costume of the two sexes consists, winter and summer alike, of a long shirt, or gown, made of thick material and with puffed sleeves. They wear this shirt until it is completely worn out, and never is it washed, so that the white turban of the men looks like dazzling snow near

their dirty shirts, which are covered all over with spittle and grease stains.

The traveller feels himself permeated with sadness at seeing the contrast between the rich and opulent nature surrounding them, and this people dressed in rags.

The capital of the country, Srinagar (City of the Sun), or, to call it by the name which is given to it here after the country, Kachmyr, is situated on the shore of the Djeloum, along which it stretches out toward the south to a distance of five kilometres and is not more than two kilometres in breadth.

Its two-story houses, inhabited by a population of 100,000 inhabitants, are built of wood and border both river banks. Everybody lives on the river, the shores of which are united by ten bridges. Terraces lead from the houses to the Djeloum, where

all day long people perform their ceremonial ablutions, bathe and wash their culinary utensils, which consist of a few copper pots. Part of the inhabitants practice the Musselman religion; two-thirds are Brahminic; and there are but few Buddhists to be found among them.

It was time to make other preparations for travel before plunging into the unknown. Having purchased different kinds of conserves, wine and other things indispensable on a journey through a country so little peopled as is Thibet, I packed all my baggage in boxes; hired six carriers and an interpreter, bought a horse for my own use, and fixed my departure for the 27th of October. To cheer up my journey, I took from a good Frenchman, M. Peicheau, the wine cultivator of the Maharadja, a big dog, Pamir, who had

already traversed the road with my friends, Bonvallot, Capus and Pepin, the well-known explorers. As I wished to shorten my journey by two days, I ordered my carriers to leave at dawn from the other side of the lake, which I crossed in a boat, and joined them and my horse at the foot of the mountain chain which separates the valley of Srinagar from the Sind gorge.

I shall never forget the tortures which we had to undergo in climbing almost on all fours to a mountain top, three thousand feet high. The carriers were out of breath; every moment I feared to see one tumble down the declivity with his burden, and I felt pained at seeing my poor dog, Pamir, panting and with his tongue hanging out, make two or three steps and fall to the ground exhausted. Forgetting my own fatigue, I

caressed and encouraged the poor animal, who, as if understanding me, got up to make another two or three steps and fall anew to the ground.

The night had come when we reached the crest; we threw ourselves greedily upon the snow to quench our thirst; and after a short rest, started to descend through a very thick pine forest, hastening to gain the village of Haïena, at the foot of the defile, fearing the attacks of beasts of prey in the darkness.

A level and good road leads from Srinagar to Haïena, going straight northward over Ganderbal, where it turns abruptly to the east, previously keeping close to the Sind, and traversing a country with a superb vegetation, as far as Kangan. Six miles from there it approaches the village of Haïena, where I repaired by a more direct route

across a pass three thousand feet high, which shortened for me both time and distance.

My first step in the unknown was marked by an incident which made all of us pass an ugly quarter of an hour. The defile of the Sind, sixty miles long, is especially noteworthy for the inhospitable hosts it contains. Among others it abounds in panthers, tigers, leopards, black bears, wolves and jackals. As though by a special misfortune, the snow had covered with its white carpet the heights of the chain, compelling those formidable, carniverous beasts to descend a little lower for shelter in their dens. We descended in silence, amid the darkness, a narrow path that wound through the centennary firs and birches, and the calm of the night was only broken by the crackling sound of our steps. Suddenly, quite near to us, a terrible

howling awoke the echoes of the woods. Our small troop stopped. "A panther!" exclaimed, in a low and frightened voice, my servant. The small caravan of a dozen men stood motionless, as though riveted to the spot. Then it occurred to me that at the moment of starting on our ascent, when already feeling fatigued, I had entrusted my revolver to one of the carriers, and my Winchester rifle to another. Now I felt bitter regret for having parted with my arms, and asked in a low voice where the man was to whom I had given the rifle. The howls became more and more violent, and filled the echoes of the woods, when suddenly a dull sound was heard, like the fall of some body. A minute later we heard the noise of a struggle and a cry of agony which mingled with the fierce roars of the starved animal.

"Saaïb, take the gun," I heard some one near by. I seized feverishly the rifle, but, vain trouble, one could not see two steps before oneself. A new cry, followed by a smothered howling, indicated to me vaguely the place of the struggle, toward which I crawled, divided between the ardent desire to "kill a panther" and a horrible fear of being eaten alive. No one dared to move; only after five minutes it occurred to one of the carriers to light a match. I then remembered the fear which feline animals exhibit at the presence of fire, and ordered my men to gather two or three handfuls of brush, which I set on fire. We then saw, about ten steps from us, one of our carriers stretched out on the ground, with his limbs frightfully lacerated by the claws of a huge panther. The beast still lay upon him defiantly, holding a

piece of flesh in its mouth. At its side, gaped a box of wine broken open by its fall when the carrier was torn down. Hardly did I make a movement to bring the rifle to my shoulder, when the panther raised itself, and turned toward us while dropping part of its horrible meal. One moment, it appeared about to spring upon me, then it suddenly wheeled, and rending the air with a howl, enough to freeze one's blood, jumped into the midst of the thicket and disappeared.

My coolies, whom an odious fear had all the time kept prostrated on the ground, recovered little by little from their fright. Keeping in readiness a few packages of dry grass and matches, we hastened to reach the village Haïena, leaving behind the remains of the unfortunate Hindoo, whose fate we feared sharing.

An hour later we had left the forest and entered the plain. I ordered my tent erected under a very leafy plane-tree, and had a great fire made before it, with a pile of wood, which was the only protection we could employ against the ferocious beasts whose howls continued to reach us from all directions. In the forest my dog had pressed himself against me, with his tail between his legs; but once under the tent, he suddenly recovered his watchfulness, and barked incessantly the whole night, being very careful, however, not to step outside. I spent a terrible night, rifle in hand, listening to the concert of those diabolical howlings, the echoes of which seemed to shake the defile. Some panthers approached our bivouac to answer the barking of Pamir, but dared not attack us.

I had left Srinagar at the head of eleven

carriers, four of whom had to carry so many boxes of wine, four others bore my travelling effects; one my weapons, another various utensils, and finally a last, who went errands or on reconnaissance. His name was "Chicari," which means "he who accompanies the hunter and gathers the prey." I discharged him in the morning on account of his cowardice and his profound ignorance of the country, and only retained four carriers. It was but slowly that I advanced toward the village of Gounde.

How beautiful is nature in the Sind pass, and how much is it beloved by the hunters! Besides the great fallow-deer, you meet there the hind, the stag, the mountain-sheep and an immense variety of birds, among which I want to mention above all the golden pheas-

ant, and others of red or snow-white plumage, very large partridges and immense eagles.

The villages situated along the Sind do not shine by their dimensions. They contain, for the greatest part, not more than ten to twenty huts of an extremely miserable appearance. Their inhabitants are clad in rags. Their cattle belongs to a very small race.

I crossed the river at Sambal, and stopped near the village Gounde, where I procured relay horses. In some villages they refused to hire horses to me; I then threatened them with my whip, which at once inspired respect and obedience; my money accomplished the same end; it inspired a servile obedience—not willingness—to obey my least orders.

Stick and gold are the true sovereigns in the Orient; without them the Very Grand Mogul would not have had any preponderance.

Night began to descend, and I was in a hurry to cross the defile which separates the villages Gogangan and Sonamarg. The road is in very bad condition, and the mountains are infested by beasts of prey which in the night descend into the very villages to seek their prey. The country is delightful and very fertile; nevertheless, but few colonists venture to settle here, on account of the neighborhood of the panthers, which come to the door-yards to seize domestic animals.

At the very exit of the defile, near the village of Tchokodar, or Thajwas, the half obscurity prevailing only permitted me to distinguish two dark masses crossing the road. They were two big bears followed by a young one. I was alone with my servant (the caravan having loitered behind), so I did

not like to attack them with only one rifle; but the long excursions which I had made on the mountain had strongly developed in me the sense of the hunter. To jump from my horse, shoot, and, without even verifying the result, change quickly the cartridge, was the affair of a second. One bear was about to jump on me, a second shot made it run away and disappear. Holding in my hand my loaded gun, I approached with circumspection, the one at which I had aimed, and found it laying on its flank, dead, with the little cub beside it. Another shot killed the little one, after which I went to work to take off the two superb jet-black skins.

This incident made us lose two hours, and night had completely set in when I erected my tent near Tchokodar, which I left at sunrise to gain Baltal, by following the course

of the Sind river. At this place the ravishing landscape of the "golden prairie" terminates abruptly with a village of the same name (Sona, gold, and Marg, prairie). The abrupt acclivity of Zodgi-La, which we next surmounted, attains an elevation of 11,500 feet, on the other side of which the whole country assumes a severe and inhospitable character. My hunting adventures closed before reaching Baltal. From there I met on the road only wild goats. In order to hunt, I would have had to leave the grand route and to penetrate into the heart of the mountains full of mysteries. I had neither the inclination nor the time to do so, and, therefore, continued quietly my journey toward Ladak.

How violent the contrast I felt when pass-

ing from the laughing nature and beautiful population of Kachmyr to the arid and forbidding rocks and the beardless and ugly inhabitants of Ladak!

The country into which I penetrated is situated at an altitude of 11,000 to 12,000 feet. Only at Karghil the level descends to 8,000 feet.

The acclivity of Zodgi-La is very rough; one must climb up an almost perpendicular rocky wall. In certain places the road winds along upon rock ledges of only a metre in width, below which the sight drops into unfathomable abysses. May the Lord preserve the traveller from a fall! At one place, the way is upon long beams introduced into holes made in the rock, like a bridge, and covered up with earth. Brr!—At the thought that a little stone might get loose

and roll down the slope of the mountain, or that a too strong oscillation of the beams could precipitate the whole structure into the abyss, and with it him who had ventured upon the perilous path, one feels like fainting more than once during this hazardous passage.

After crossing the glaciers we stopped in a valley and prepared to spend the night near a hut, a dismal place surrounded by eternal ice and snow.

From Baltal the distances are determined by means of daks, *i. e.*, postal stations for mail service. They are low huts, about seven kilometres distant from each other. A man is permanently established in each of these huts. The postal service between Kachmyr and Thibet is yet carried on in a very primitive form. The letters are enclosed in a leather bag,

which is handed to the care of a carrier. The latter runs rapidly over the seven kilometres assigned to him, carrying on his back a basket which holds several of these bags, which he delivers to another carrier, who, in his turn, accomplishes his task in an identical manner. Neither rain nor snow can arrest these carriers. In this way the mail service is carried on between Kachmyr and Thibet, and *vice versa* once a week. For each course the letter-carrier is paid six annas (twenty cents); the same wages as is paid to the carriers of merchandise. This sum I also paid to every one of my servants for carrying a ten times heavier load.

It makes one's heart ache to see the pale and tired-looking figures of these carriers; but what is to be done? It is the custom of the country. The tea is brought from China

by a similar system of transportation, which is rapid and inexpensive.

In the village of Montaiyan, I found again the Yarkandien caravan of pilgrims, whom I had promised to accompany on their journey. They recognized me from a distance, and asked me to examine one of their men, who had fallen sick. I found him writhing in the agonies of an intense fever. Shaking my hands as a sign of despair, I pointed to the heavens and gave them to understand that human will and science were now useless, and that God alone could save him. These people journeyed by small stages only; I, therefore, left them and arrived in the evening at Drass, situated at the bottom of a valley near a river of the same name. Near Drass, a little fort of ancient construction, but freshly painted,

stands aloof, under the guard of three Sikhs of the Maharadja's army.

At Drass, my domicile was the post-house, which is a station—and the only one—of an unique telegraph line from Srinagar to the interior of the Himalayas. From that time on, I no more had my tent put up each evening, but stopped in the caravansarais; places which, though made repulsive by their dirt, are kept warm by the enormous piles of wood burned in their fireplaces.

From Drass to Karghil the landscape is unpleasing and monotonous, if one excepts the marvellous effects of the rising and setting sun and the beautiful moonlight. Apart from these the road is wearisome and abounding with dangers. Karghil is the principal place of the district, where the governor of the country resides. Its site is

quite picturesque. Two water courses, the Souron and the Wakkha, roll their noisy and turbulent waters among rocks and sunken snags of up-rooted trees, escaping from their respective defiles in the rocks, to join in forming here the river Souron, upon the banks of which stands Karghil. A little fort, garrisoned by two or three Sikhs, shows its outlines at the junction of the streams. Provided with a horse, I continued my journey at break of day, entering now the province of Ladak, or Little Thibet. I traversed a ricketty bridge, composed—like all the bridges of Kachmyr—of two long beams, the ends of which were supported upon the banks and the floor made of a layer of fagots and sticks, which imparted to the traveller, at least the illusion of a suspension bridge. Soon afterward I climbed slowly up on a

little plateau, which crosses the way at a distance of two kilometres, to descend into the narrow valley of Wakkha. Here there are several villages, among which, on the left shore, is the very picturesque one called Paskium.

Here my feet trod Buddhist ground. The inhabitants are of a very simple and mild disposition, seemingly ignorant of "quarrelling." Women are very rare among them. Those of them whom I encountered were distinguished from the women I had hitherto seen in India or Kachmyr, by the air of gaiety and prosperity apparent in their countenances. How could it be otherwise, since each woman in this country has, on an average, three to five husbands, and possesses them in the most legitimate way in the world. Polyandry flourishes here. How-

ever large a family may be, there is but one woman in it. If the family does not contain already more than two husbands, a bachelor may share its advantages, for a consideration. The days sacred to each one of those husbands are determined in advance, and all acquit themselves of their respective duties and respect each others' rights. The men generally seem feeble, with bent backs, and do not live to old age. During my travels in Ladak, I only encountered one man so old that his hair was white.

From Karghil to the centre of Ladak, the road had a more cheerful aspect than that I had traversed before reaching Karghil, its prospect being brightened by a number of little hamlets, but trees and verdure were, unfortunately, rare.

Twenty miles from Karghil, at the end of

the defile formed by the rapid current of the Wakkha, is a little village called Chargol, in the centre of which stand three chapels, decorated with lively colors (*t'horthenes*, to give them the name they bear in Thibet). Below, near the river, are masses of rocks, in the form of long and large walls, upon which are thrown, in apparent disorder, flat stones of different colors and sizes. Upon these stones are engraved all sorts of prayers, in Ourd, Sanscrit and Thibetan, and one can even find among them inscriptions in Arabic characters. Without the knowledge of my carriers, I succeeded in taking away a few of these stones, which are now in the palace of the Trocadero.

Along the way, from Chargol, one finds frequently oblong mounds, artificial constructions. After sunrise, with fresh horses,

I resumed my journey and stopped near the "gonpa" (monastery) of Moulbek, which seems glued on the flank of an isolated rock. Below is the hamlet of Wakkha, and not far from there is to be seen another rock, of very strange form, which seems to have been placed where it stands by human hands. In one side of it is cut a Buddha several metres in height. Upon it are several cylinders, the turning of which serves for prayers. They are a sort of wooden barrel, draped with yellow or white fabrics, and are attached to vertically planted stakes. It requires only the least wind to make them turn. The person who puts up one of these cylinders no longer feels it obligatory upon him to say his prayers, for all that devout believers can ask of God is written upon the cylinders. Seen from a distance this white

painted monastery, standing sharply out from the gray background of the rocks, with all these whirling, petticoated wheels, produce a strange effect in this dead country. I left my horses in the hamlet of Wakkha, and, followed by my servant, walked toward the convent, which is reached by a narrow stairway cut in the rock. At the top, I was received by a very fat lama, with a scanty, straggling beard under his chin—a common characteristic of the Thibetan people—who was very ugly, but very cordial. His costume consisted of a yellow robe and a sort of big night-cap, with projecting flaps above the ears, of the same color. He held in his hand a copper prayer-machine which, from time to time, he shook with his left hand, without at all permitting that exercise to interfere with his conversation. It was his

eternal prayer, which he thus communicated to the wind, so that by this element it should be borne to Heaven. We traversed a suite of low chambers, upon the walls of which were images of Buddha, of all sizes and made of all kinds of materials, all alike covered by a thick layer of dust. Finally we reached an open terrace, from which the eyes, taking in the surrounding region, rested upon an inhospitable country, strewn with grayish rocks and traversed by only a single road, which on both sides lost itself in the horizon.

When we were seated, they brought us beer, made with hops, called here "Tchang" and brewed in the cloister. It has a tendency to rapidly produce *embonpoint* upon the monks, which is regarded as a sign of the particular favor of Heaven.

They spoke here the Thibetan language. The origin of this language is full of obscurity. One thing is certain, that a king of Thibet, a contemporary of Mohammed, undertook the creation of an universal language for all the disciples of Buddha. To this end he had simplified the Sanscrit grammar, composed an alphabet containing an infinite number of signs, and thus laid the foundations of a language the pronunciation of which is one of the easiest and the writing the most complicated. Indeed, in order to represent a sound one must employ not less than eight characters. All the modern literature of Thibet is written in this language. The pure Thibetan is only spoken in Ladak and Oriental Thibet. In all the other parts of the country are employed dialects formed by the mixture of this mother language with different idioms

taken from the neighboring peoples of the various regions round about. In the ordinary life of the Thibetan, there exists always two languages, one of which is absolutely incomprehensible to the women, while the other is spoken by the entire nation; but only in the convents can be found the Thibetan language in all its purity and integrity.

The lamas much prefer the visits of Europeans to those of Musselmen, and when I asked the one who received me why this was so, he answered me: "Musselmen have no point of contact at all with our religion. Only comparatively recently, in their victorious campaign, they have converted, by force, part of the Buddhists to Islam. It requires of us great efforts to bring back those Musselmen, descendants of Buddhists,

into the path of the true God. As regards the Europeans, it is quite a different affair. Not only do they profess the essential principles of monotheism, but they are, in a sense, adorers of Buddha, with almost the same rites as the lamas who inhabit Thibet. The only fault of the Christians is that after having adopted the great doctrines of Buddha, they have completely separated themselves from him, and have created for themselves a different Dalai-Lama. Our Dalai-Lama is the only one who has received the divine gift of seeing, face to face, the majesty of Buddha, and is empowered to serve as an intermediary between earth and heaven."

"Which Dalai-Lama of the Christians do you refer to?" I asked him; "we have one, the Son of God, to whom we address directly our fervent prayers, and to him alone we

recur to intercede with our One and Indivisible God."

"It is not him of whom it is a question, Sahib," he replied. "We, too, respect him, whom we reverence as son of the One and Indivisible God, but we do not see in him the Only Son, but the excellent being who was chosen among all. Buddha, indeed, has incarnated himself, with his divine nature, in the person of the sacred Issa, who, without employing fire or iron, has gone forth to propagate our true and great religion among all the world. Him whom I meant was your terrestrial Dalai-Lama; he to whom you have given the title of 'Father of the Church.' That is a great sin. May he be brought back, with the flock, who are now in a bad road," piously added the lama, giving another twirl to his prayer-machine.

I understood now that he alluded to the Pope. "You have told me that a son of Buddha, Issa, the elect among all, had spread your religion on the Earth. Who is he?" I asked.

At this question the lama's eyes opened wide; he looked at me with astonishment and pronounced some words I could not catch, murmuring in an unintelligible way. "Issa," he finally replied, "is a great prophet, one of the first after the twenty-two Buddhas. He is greater than any one of all the Dalai-Lamas, for he constitutes part of the spirituality of our Lord. It is he who has instructed you; he who brought back into the bosom of God the frivolous and wicked souls; he who made you worthy of the beneficence of the Creator, who has ordained that each being should know good and evil. His name

and his acts have been chronicled in our sacred writings, and when reading how his great life passed away in the midst of an erring people, we weep for the horrible sin of the heathen who murdered him, after subjecting him to torture."

I was struck by this recital of the lama. The prophet Issa—his tortures and death—our Christian Dalai-Lama—the Buddhist recognizing Christianity—all these made me think more and more of Jesus Christ. I asked my interpreter not to lose a single word of what the lama told me.

"Where can those writings be found, and who compiled them?" I asked the monk.

"The principal scrolls — which were written in India and Nepaul, at different epochs, as the events happened—are in Lhassa; several thousands in number. In

some great convents are to be found copies, which the lamas, during their sojourn in Lhassa, have made, at various times, and have then given to their cloisters as souvenirs of the period they spent with the Dalai-Lama."

"But you, yourselves; do you not possess copies of the scrolls bearing upon the prophet Issa?"

"We have not. Our convent is insignificant, and since its foundation our successive lamas have had only a few hundred manuscripts in their library. The great cloisters have several thousands of them; but they are sacred things which will not, anywhere, be shown to you."

We spoke togetner a few minutes longer, after which I went home, all the while thinking of the lama's statements. Issa, a prophet of the Buddhists! But, how could this be?

Of Jewish origin, he lived in Palestine and in Egypt; and the Gospels do not contain one word, not even the least allusion, to the part which Buddhism should have played in the education of Jesus.

I made up my mind to visit all the convents of Thibet, in the hope of gathering fuller information upon the prophet Issa, and perhaps copies of the chronicles bearing upon this subject.

We traversed the Namykala Pass, at 30,000 feet of altitude, whence we descended into the valley of the River Salinoumah. Turning southward, we gained Karbou, leaving behind us, on the opposite bank, numerous villages, among others, Chagdoom, which is at the top of a rock, an extremely imposing sight. Its houses are white and have a sort

of festive look, with their two and three stories. This, by the way, is a common peculiarity of all the villages of Ladak. The eye of the European, travelling in Kachmyr, would soon lose sight of all architecture to which he had been accustomed. In Ladak, on the contrary, he would be agreeably surprised at seeing the little two and three-story houses, reminders to him of those in European provinces. Near the city of Karbou, upon two perpendicular rocks, one sees the ruins of a little town or village. A tempest and an earthquake are said to have shaken down its walls, the solidity of which seems to have been exceptional.

The next day I traversed the Fotu-La Pass, at an altitude of 13,500 feet. At its summit stands a little *t'horthene* (chapel). Thence, following the dry bed of a stream, I de-

scended to the hamlet of Lamayure, the sudden appearance of which is a surprise to the traveller. A convent, which seems grafted on the side of the rock, or held there in some miraculous way, dominates the village. Stairs are unknown in this cloister. In order to pass from one story of it to another, ropes are used. Communication with the world outside is through a labyrinth of passages in the rock. Under the windows of the convent —which make one think of birds' nests on the face of a cliff—is a little inn, the rooms of which are little inviting. Hardly had I stretched myself on the carpet in one of them, when the monks, dressed in their yellow robes, filled the apartment, bothered me with questions as to whence I came, the purpose of my coming, where I was going, and so on, finally inviting me to come and see them.

In spite of my fatigue I accepted their invitation and set out with them, to climb up the excavated passages in the rock, which were encumbered with an infinity of prayer cylinders and wheels, which I could not but touch and set turning as I brushed past them. They are placed there that they may be so turned, saving to the passers-by the time they might otherwise lose in saying their prayers—as if their affairs were so absorbing, and their time so precious, that they could not find leisure to pray. Many pious Buddhists use for this purpose an apparatus arranged to be turned by the current of a stream. I have seen a long row of cylinders, provided with their prayer formulas, placed along a river bank, in such a way that the water kept them constantly in motion, this ingenious device freeing the proprietors

from any further obligation to say prayers themselves.

I sat down on a bench in the hall, where semi-obscurity reigned. The walls were garnished with little statues of Buddha, books and prayer-wheels. The loquacious lamas began explaining to me the significance of each object.

"And those books?" I asked them; "they, no doubt, have reference to religion."

"Yes, sir. These are a few religious volumes which deal with the primary and principal rites of the life common to all. We possess several parts of the words of Buddha consecrated to the Great and Indivisible Divine Being, and to all that issued from his hands."

"Is there not, among those books, some account of the prophet Issa?"

"No, sir," answered the monk. "We only possess a few principal treatises relating to the observance of the religious rites. As for the biographies of our saints, they are collected in Lhassa. There are even great cloisters which have not had the time to procure them. Before coming to this gonpa, I was for several years in a great convent, on the other side of Ladak, and have seen there thousands of books, and scrolls copied out of various books by the lamas of the monastery."

By some further interrogation I learned that the convent in question was near Leh, but my persistent inquiries had the effect of exciting the suspicions of the lamas. They showed me the way out with evident pleasure, and, regaining my room, I fell asleep—after a light lunch—leaving orders with my Hindu to inform himself in a skilful way,

from some of the younger lamas of the convent, about the monastery in which their chief had lived before coming to Lamayure.

In the morning, when we set forth on our journey, the Hindu told me that he could get nothing from the lamas, who were very reticent. I will not stop to describe the life of the monks in those convents, for it is the same in all the cloisters of Ladak. I have seen the celebrated monastery of Leh—of which I shall have to speak later on—and learned there the strange existences the monks and religious people lead, which is everywhere the same. In Lamayure commences a declivity which, through a steep, narrow and sombre gorge, extends toward India.

Without having the least idea of the dangers which the descent presented, I sent my

carriers in advance and started on a route, rather pleasant at the outset, which passes between the brown clay hills, but soon it produced upon me the most depressing effect, as though I was traversing a gloomy subterranean passage. Then the road came out on the flank of the mountain, above a terrible abyss. If a rider had met me, we could not possibly have passed each other, the way was so narrow. All description would fail to convey a sense of the grandeur and wild beauty of this cañon, the summit of the walls of which seemed to reach the sky. At some points it became so narrow that from my saddle I could, with my cane, touch the opposite rock. At other places, death might be fancied looking up expectantly, from the abyss, at the traveller. It was too late to dismount. In entering alone this gorge, I

had not the faintest idea that I would have occasion to regret my foolish imprudence. I had not realized its character. It was simply an enormous crevasse, rent by some Titanic throe of nature, some tremendous earthquake, which had split the granite mountain. In its bottom I could just distinguish a hardly perceptible white thread, an impetuous torrent, the dull roar of which filled the defile with mysterious and impressive sound. Far overhead extended, narrow and sinuously, a blue ribbon, the only glimpse of the celestial world that the frowning granite walls permitted to be seen. It was a thrilling pleasure, this majestic view of nature. At the same time, its rugged severity, the vastness of its proportions, the deathly silence only invaded by the ominous murmur from the depths beneath, all together filled me with

an unconquerable depression. I had about eight miles in which to experience these sensations, at once sweet and painful. Then, turning to the right, our little caravan reached a small valley, almost surrounded by precipitous granite rocks, which mirrored themselves in the Indus. On the bank of the river stands the little fortress Khalsi, a celebrated fortification dating from the epoch of the Musselman invasion, by which runs the wild road from Kachmyr to Thibet.

We crossed the Indus on an almost suspended bridge which led directly to the door of the fortress, thus impossible of evasion. Rapidly we traversed the valley, then the village of Khalsi, for I was anxious to spend the night in the hamlet of Snowely, which is placed upon terraces descending to the Indus. The two following days I trav-

elled tranquilly and without any difficulties to overcome, along the shore of the Indus, in a picturesque country—which brought me to Leh, the capital of Ladak.

While traversing the little valley of Saspoula, at a distance of several kilometres from the village of the same name, I found "*t'horthenes*" and two cloisters, above one of which floated the French flag. Later on, I learned that a French engineer had presented the flag to the monks, who displayed it simply as a decoration of their building.

I passed the night at Saspoula and certainly did not forget to visit the cloisters, seeing there for the tenth time the omnipresent dust-covered images of Buddha; the flags and banners heaped in a corner; ugly masks on the floor; books and papyrus rolls heaped together without order or care, and

the inevitable abundance of prayer-wheels. The lamas demonstrated a particular pleasure in exhibiting these things, doing it with the air of shopmen displaying their goods, with very little care for the degree of interest the traveller may take in them. "We must show everything, in the hope that the sight alone of these sacred objects will force the traveller to believe in the divine grandeur of the human soul."

Respecting the prophet Issa, they gave me the same account I already had, and I learned, what I had known before, that the books which could instruct me about him were at Lhassa, and that only the great monasteries possessed some copies. I did not think any more of passing Kara-koroum, but only of finding the history of the prophet Issa, which would, perhaps, bring to light the entire life

of the best of men, and complete the rather vague information which the Gospels afford us about him.

Not far from Leh, and at the entrance of the valley of the same name, our road passed near an isolated rock, on the top of which were constructed a fort—with two towers and without garrison—and a little convent named Pitak. A mountain, 10,500 feet high, protects the entrance to Thibet. There the road makes a sudden turn toward the north, in the direction of Leh, six miles from Pitak and a thousand feet higher. Immense granite mountains tower above Leh, to a height of 18,000 or 19,000 feet, their crests covered with eternal snow. The city itself, surrounded by a girdle of stunted aspen trees, rises upon successive terraces, which are dominated by an old fort and the palaces of

the ancient sovereigns of Ladak. Toward evening I made my entrance into Leh, and stopped at a bengalow constructed especially for Europeans, whom the road from India brings here in the hunting season.

LADAK.

Ladak formerly was part of Great Thibet. The powerful invading forces from the north which traversed the country to conquer Kachmyr, and the wars of which Ladak was the theatre, not only reduced it to misery, but eventually subtracted it from the political domination of Lhassa, and made it the prey of one conqueror after another. The Musselmen, who sized Kachmyr and Ladak at a remote epoch, converted by force the poor inhabitants of old Thibet to the faith of Islam. The political existence of Ladak ended with the annexation of this country to Kachmyr by the sëiks, which, however, per-

mitted the Ladakians to return to their ancient beliefs. Two-thirds of the inhabitants took advantage of this opportunity to rebuild their gonpas and take up their past life anew. Only the Baltistans remained Musselman schüttes—a sect to which the conquerors of the country had belonged. They, however, have only conserved a vague shadow of Islamism, the character of which manifests itself in their ceremonials and in the polygamy which they practice. Some lamas affirmed to me that they did not despair of one day bringing them back to the faith of their ancestors.

From the religious point of view Ladak is a dependency of Lhassa, the capital of Thibet and the place of residence of the Dalai-Lama. In Lhassa are located the principal Khoutoukhtes, or Supreme Lamas,

and the Chogzots, or administrators. Politically, it is under the authority of the Maharadja of Kachmyr, who is represented there by a governor.

The inhabitants of Ladak belong to the Chinese-Touranian race, and are divided into Ladakians and Tchampas. The former lead a sedentary existence, building villages of two-story houses along the narrow valleys, are cleanly in their habits, and cultivators of the soil. They are excessively ugly; thin, with stooping figures and small heads set deep between their shoulders; their cheek bones salient, foreheads narrow, eyes black and brilliant, as are those of all the Mongol race; noses flat, mouths large and thin-lipped; and from their small chins, very thinly garnished by a few hairs, deep wrinkles extend upward furrowing their hol-

low cheeks. To all this, add a close-shaven head with only a little bristling fringe of hair, and you will have the general type, not alone of Ladak, but of entire Thibet.

The women are also of small stature, and have exceedingly prominent cheek bones, but seem to be of much more robust constitution. A healthy red tinges their cheeks and sympathetic smiles linger upon their lips. They have good dispositions, joyous inclinations, and are fond of laughing.

The severity of the climate and rudeness of the country, do not permit to the Ladakians much latitude in quality and colors of costume. They wear gowns of simple gray linen and coarse dull-hued clothing of their own manufacture. The pantaloons of the men only descend to their knees. People in good circumstances wear, in addition to the

ordinary dress, the "choga," a sort of overcoat which is draped on the back when not wrapped around the figure. In winter they wear fur caps, with big ear flaps, and in summer cover their heads with a sort of cloth hood, the top of which dangles on one side, like a Phrygian cap. Their shoes are made of felt and covered with leather. A whole arsenal of little things hangs down from their belts, among which you will find a needle case, a knife, a pen and inkstand, a tobacco pouch, a pipe, and a diminutive specimen of the omnipresent prayer-cylinder.

The Thibetan men are generally so lazy, that if a braid of hair happens to become loose, it is not tressed up again for three months, and when once a shirt is put on the body, it is not again taken off until it falls to pieces. Their overcoats are always unclean,

and, on the back, one may contemplate a long oily stripe imprinted by the braid of hair, which is carefully greased every day. They wash themselves once a year, but even then do not do so voluntarily, but because compelled by law. They emit such a terrible stench that one avoids, as much as possible, being near them.

The Thibetan women, on the contrary, are very fond of cleanliness and order. They wash themselves daily and as often as may be needful. Short and clean chemises hide their dazzling white necks. The Thibetan woman throws on her round shoulders a red jacket, the flaps of which are covered by tight pantaloons of green or red cloth, made in such a manner as to puff up and so protect the legs against the cold. She wears embroidered red half-boots, trimmed and lined

with fur. A large cloth petticoat with numerous folds completes her home toilet. Her hair is arranged in thin braids, to which, by means of pins, a large piece of floating cloth is attached,—which reminds one of the headdress so common in Italy. Underneath this sort of veil are suspended a variety of various colored pebbles, coins and pieces of metal. The ears are covered by flaps made of cloth or fur. A furred sheepskin covers the back, poor women contenting themselves with a simple plain skin of the animal, while wealthy ladies wear veritable cloaks, lined with red cloth and adorned with gold fringes.

The Ladak woman, whether walking in the streets or visiting her neighbors, always carries upon her back a conical basket, the smaller end of which is toward the ground. They fill it with the dung of horses or cows,

which constitute the combustible of the country. Every woman has money of her own, and spends it for jewelry. Generally she purchases, at a small expense, large pieces of turquoise, which are added to the *bizarre* ornaments of her headdress. I have seen pieces so worn which weighed nearly five pounds. The Ladak woman occupies a social position for which she is envied by all women of the Orient. She is free and respected. With the exception of some rural work, she passes the greatest part of her time in visiting. It must, however, be added that women's gossip is here a perfectly unknown thing.

The settled population of Ladak is engaged in agriculture, but they own so little land (the share of each may amount to about eight acres) that the revenue drawn from it

is insufficient to provide them with the barest necessities and does not permit them to pay taxes. Manual occupations are generally despised. Artisans and musicians form the lowest class of society. The name by which they are designated is Bem, and people are very careful not to contract any alliance with them. The hours of leisure left by rural work are spent in hunting the wild sheep of Thibet, the skins of which are highly valued in India. The poorest, *i. e.*, those who have not the means to purchase arms for hunting, hire themselves as coolies. This is also an occupation of women, who are very capable of enduring arduous toil. They are healthier than their husbands, whose laziness goes so far that, careless of cold or heat, they are capable of spending a whole night

in the open air on a bed of stones rather than take the trouble to go to bed.

Polyandry (which I shall treat later more fully) causes the formation of very large families, who, in common, cultivate their jointly possessed lands, with the assistance of yaks, zos and zomos (oxen and cows). A member of a family cannot detach himself from it, and when he dies, his share reverts to the survivors in common.

They sow but little wheat and the grain is very small, owing to the severity of the climate. They also harvest barley, which they pulverize before selling. When work in the field is ended, all male inhabitants go to gather on the mountain a wild herb called "enoriota," and large thorn bushes or "dama," which are used as fuel, since combustibles are scarce in Ladak. You see there

neither trees nor gardens, and only exceptionally thin clumps of willows and poplars grow on the shores of the rivers. Near the villages are also found some aspen trees ; but, on account of the unfertility of the ground, arboriculture is unknown and gardening is little successful.

The absence of wood is especially noticeable in the buildings, which are made of sun-dried bricks, or, more frequently, of stones of medium size which are agglomerated with a kind of mortar composed of clay and chopped straw. The houses of the settled inhabitants are two stories high, their fronts white-washed, and their window-sashes painted with lively colors. The flat roof forms a terrace which is decorated with wild flowers, and here, during good weather, the inhabitants spend much of their time contemplat-

ing nature, or turning their prayer-wheels. Every dwelling-house is composed of many rooms; among them always one of superior size, the walls of which are decorated with superb fur-skins, and which is reserved for visitors. In the other rooms are beds and other furniture. Rich people possess, moreover, a special room filled with all kinds of idols, and set apart as a place of worship.

Life here is very regular. They eat anything attainable, without much choice; the principal nourishment of the Ladak people, however, being exceedingly simple. Their breakfast consists of a piece of rye bread. At dinner, they serve on the table a bowl with meal into which lukewarm water is stirred with little rods until the mixture assumes the consistency of thick paste. From this, small portions are scooped out and eaten

with milk. In the evening, bread and tea are served. Meat is a superfluous luxury. Only the hunters introduce some variety in their alimentation, by eating the meat of wild sheep, eagles or pheasants, which are very common in this country.

During the day, on every excuse and opportunity, they drink "tchang," a kind of pale, unfermented beer.

If it happens that a Ladakian, mounted on a pony (such privileged people are very rare), goes to seek work in the surrounding country, he provides himself with a small stock of meal; when dinner time comes, he descends to a river or spring, mixes with water, in a wooden cup that he always has with him, some of the meal, swallows the simple refreshment and washes it down with water.

The Tchampas, or nomads, who constitute the other part of Ladak's population, are rougher, and much poorer than the settled population. They are, for the most part, hunters, who completely neglect agriculture. Although they profess the Buddhistic religion, they never frequent the cloisters unless in want of meal, which they obtain in exchange for their venison. They mostly camp in tents on the summits of the mountains, where the cold is very great. While the properly called Ladakians are peaceable, very desirous of learning, of an incarnated laziness, and are never known to tell untruth; the Tchampas, on the contrary, are very irascible, extremely lively, great liars and profess a great disdain for the convents.

Among them lives the small population of Khombas, wanderers from the vicinity of

Lhassa, who lead the miserable existence of a troupe of begging gipsies on the highways. Incapable of any work whatever, speaking a language not spoken in the country where they beg for their subsistence, they are the objects of general contempt, and are only tolerated out of pity for their deplorable condition, when hunger drives their mendicant bands to seek alms in the villages.

Polyandry, which is universally prevalent here, of course interested my curiosity. This institution is, by the way, not the outcome of Buddha's doctrines. Polyandry existed long before the advent of Buddha. It assumed considerable proportions in India, where it constituted one of the most effective means for checking the growth of a population which tends to constant increase, an

economic danger which is even yet combatted by the abominable custom of killing new-born female children, which causes terrible ravages in the child-life of India. The efforts made by the English in their enactments against the suppression of the future mothers have proved futile and fruitless. Manu himself established polyandry as a law, and Buddhist preachers, who had renounced Brahminism and preached the use of opium, imported this custom into Ceylon, Thibet, Corea, and the country of the Moguls. For a long time suppressed in China, polyandry, which flourishes in Thibet and Ceylon, is also met with among the Kalmonks, between Todas in Southern India, and Nairs on the coast of Malabar. Traces of this strange constitution of the family are also to be found

with the Tasmanians and the Irquois Indians in North America.

Polyandry, by the way, has even flourished in Europe, if we may believe Cæsar, who, in his *De Bello Gallico*, book V., page 17, writes: "*Uxores habent deni duodenique inter se communes, et maxime fratres cum fratribus et parentes cum liberis.*"

In view of all this it is impossible to hold any religion responsible for the existence of the institution of polyandry. In Thibet it can be explained by motives of an economical nature; the small quantity of arable land falling to the share of each inhabitant. In order to support the 1,500,000 inhabitants distributed in Thibet, upon a surface of 1,200,000 square kilometres, the Buddhists were forced to adopt polyandry. Moreover, each family is bound to enter one of its mem-

bers in a religious order. The first-born is consecrated to a gonpa, which is inevitably found upon an elevation, at the entrance of every village. As soon as the child attains the age of eighteen years, he is entrusted to the caravans which pass Lhassa, where he remains from eight to fifteen years as a novice, in one of the gonpas which are near the city. There he learns to read and write, is taught the religious rites and studies the sacred parchments written in the Pali language—which formerly used to be the language of the country of Maguada, where, according to tradition, Buddha was born.

The oldest brother remaining in a family chooses a wife, who becomes common to his brothers. The choice of the bride and the nuptial ceremonies are most rudimentary. When a wife and her husband have decided

upon the marriage of a son, the brother who possesses the right of choice, pays a visit to a neighboring family in which there is a marriageable daughter.

The first and second visits are spent in more or less indifferent conversations, blended with frequent libations of tchang, and on the third visit only does the young man declare his intention to take a wife. Upon this the girl is formally introduced to him. She is generally not unknown to the wooer, as, in Ladak, women never veil their faces.

A girl cannot be married without her consent. When the young man is accepted, he takes his bride to his house, and she becomes his wife and also the wife of all his brothers. A family which has an only son sends him to a woman who has no more than two or three husbands, and he offers himself to her

as a fourth husband. Such an offer is seldom declined, and the young man settles in the new family.

The newly married remain with the parents of the husbands, until the young wife bears her first child. The day after that event, the grandparents of the infant make over the bulk of their fortune to the new family, and, abandoning the old home to them, seek other shelter.

Sometimes marriages are contracted between youth who have not reached a marriageable age, but in such event, the married couple are made to live apart, until they have attained and even passed the age required. An unmarried girl who becomes *enceinte*, far from being exposed to the scorn of every one, is shown the highest respect; for she is demonstrated fruitful, and men

eagerly seek her in marriage. A wife has the unquestioned right of having an unlimited number of husbands and lovers. If she likes a young man, she takes him home, announces that he has been chosen by her as a "jing-tuh" (a lover), and endows him with all the personal rights of a husband, which situation is accepted by her temporarily supplanted husbands with a certain philosophic pleasure, which is the more pronounced if their wife has proved sterile during the three first years of her marriage.

They certainly have here not even a vague idea of jealousy. The Thibetan's blood is too cold to know love, which, for him, would be almost an anachronism; if indeed he were not conscious that the sentiment of the entire community would be against him, as a flagrant violator of popular usage and estab-

lished rights, in restraining the freedom of the women. The selfish enjoyment of love would be, in their eyes, an unjustifiable luxury.

In case of a husband's absence, his place may be offered to a bachelor or a widower. The latter are here in the minority, since the wife generally survives her feeble husbands. Sometimes a Buddhist traveller, whom his affairs bring to the village, is chosen for this office. A husband who travels, or seeks for work in the neighboring country, at every stop takes advantage of his co-religionists' hospitality, who offer him their own wives. The husbands of a sterile woman exert themselves to find opportunities for hospitality, which may happily eventuate in a change in her condition, that they may be made happy fathers.

The wife enjoys the general esteem, is ever of a cheerful disposition, takes part in everything that is going on, goes and comes without any restriction, anywhere and everywhere she pleases, with the exception of the principal prayer-room of the monastery, entrance into which is formally prohibited to her.

Children know only their mother, and do not feel the least affection for their fathers, for the simple reason that they have so many. Without approving polyandry, I could not well blame Thibet for this institution, since without it, the population would prodigiously increase. Famine and misery would fall upon the whole nation, with all the sinister *sequellæ* of murder and theft, crimes so far absolutely unknown in the whole country.

A FESTIVAL IN A GONPA.

Leh, the capital of Ladak, is a little town of 5,000 inhabitants, who live in white, two-story houses, upon two or three streets, principally. In its centre is the square of the bazaar, where the merchants of India, China, Turkestan, Kachmyr and Thibet, come to exchange their products for the Thibetan gold. Here the natives provide themselves with cloths for themselves and their monks, and various objects of real necessity.

An old uninhabited palace rises upon a hill which dominates the town. Fronting the central square is a vast building, two

stories in height, the residence of the governor of Ladak, the Vizier Souradjbal—a very amiable and universally popular Pendjaban, who has received in London the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

To entertain me, during my sojourn in Leh, the governor arranged, on the bazaar square, a game of polo—the national sport of the Thibetans, which the English have adopted and introduced into Europe. In the evening, after the game, the people executed dances and played games before the governor's residence. Large bonfires illuminated the scene, lighting up the throng of inhabitants, who formed a great circle about the performers. The latter, in considerable numbers, disguised as animals, devils and sorcerers, jumped and contorted themselves in rhythmic dances timed to the measure of

the monotonous and unpleasing music made by two long trumpets and a drum.

The infernal racket and shouting of the crowd wearied me. The performance ended with some graceful dances by Thibetan women, who spun upon their heels, swaying to and fro, and, in passing before the spectators in the windows of the residence, greeted us by the clashing together of the copper and ivory bracelets on their crossed wrists.

The next day, at an early hour, I repaired to the great Himis convent, which, a little distance from Leh, is elevated upon the top of a great rock, on a picturesque site, commanding the valley of the Indies. It is one of the principal monasteries of the country, and is maintained by the gifts of the people and the subsidies it receives from Lhassa. On the road leading to it, beyond the bridge

crossing the Indus, and in the vicinity of the villages lining the way, one finds heaps of stones bearing engraved inscriptions, such as have already been described, and *t'horthenes*. At these places, our guides were very careful to turn to the right. I wished to turn my horse to the left, but the Ladakians made him go back and led him by his halter to the right, explaining to me that such was their established usage. I found it impossible to learn the origin or reason of this custom.

Above the gonpa rises a battlemented tower, visible from a great distance. We climbed, on foot, to the level on which the edifice stands and found ourselves confronted by a large door, painted in brilliant colors, the portal of a vast two-story building enclosing a court paved with little pebbles. To the right, in one of the angles of the

court, is another huge painted door, adorned with big copper rings. It is the entrance to the principal temple, which is decorated with paintings of the principal gods, and contains a great statue of Buddha and a multitude of sacred statuettes. To the left, upon a verandah, was placed an immense prayer-cylinder. All the lamas of the convent, with their chief, stood about it, when we entered the court. Below the verandah were musicians, holding long trumpets and drums.

At the right of the court were a number of doors, leading to the rooms of the lamas; all decorated with sacred paintings and provided with little prayer-barrels fancifully surmounted by black and white tridents, from the points of which floated ribbons bearing inscriptions—doubtless prayers. In the centre of the court were raised two tall masts,

from the tops of which dangled tails of yaks, and long paper streamers floated, covered with religious inscriptions. All along the walls were numerous prayer-barrels, adorned with ribbons.

A profound silence reigned among the many spectators present. All awaited anxiously the commencement of a religious "mystery," which was about to be presented. We took up a position near the verandah. Almost immediately, the musicians drew from their long trumpets soft and monotonous tones, marking the time by measured beats upon an odd-looking drum, broad and shallow, upreared upon a stick planted in the ground. At the first sounds of the strange music, in which joined the voices of the lamas in a melancholy chant, the doors along the wall opened simultaneously, giving entrance

to about twenty masked persons, disguised as animals, birds, devils and imaginary monsters. On their breasts they bore representations of fantastic dragons, demons and skulls, embroidered with Chinese silk of various colors. From the conical hats they wore, depended to their breasts long multicolored ribbons, covered with inscriptions. Their masks were white death's-heads. Slowly they marched about the masts, stretching out their arms from time to time and flourishing with their left hands spoon-shaped objects, the bowl portions of which were said to be fragments of human crania, with ribbons attached, having affixed to their ends human hair, which, I was assured, had been taken from scalped enemies. Their promenade, in gradually narrowing circles about the masts, soon became merely a con-

fused jostling of each other; when the rolling of the drum grew more accentuated, the performers for an instant stopped, then started again, swinging above their heads yellow sticks, ribbon-decked, which with their right hands they brandished in menacing attitudes.

After making a salute to the chief lama, they approached the door leading to the temple, which at this instant opened, and from it another band came forth, whose heads were covered by copper masks. Their dresses were of rich materials, embroidered in various bright colors. In one hand each of them carried a small tambourine and with the other he agitated a little bell. From the rim of each tambourine depended a metallic ball, so placed that the least movement of the hand brought it in contact with the

resonant tympanum, which caused a strange, continuous under-current of pulsating sound. These new performers circled several times about the court, marking the time of their dancing steps by measured thumpings of the tambourines. At the completion of each turn, they made a deafening noise with their instruments. Finally, they ran to the temple-door and ranged themselves upon the steps before it.

For a moment, there was silence. Then we saw emerge from the temple a third band of performers. Their enormous masks represented different deities, and each bore upon its forehead "the third eye." At their head marched Thlogan-Poudma-Jungnas (literally "he who was born in the lotus flower"). Another richly dressed mask marched beside him, carrying a yellow parasol covered with sym-

bolic designs. His suite was composed of gods, in magnificent costumes; Dorje-Trolong and Sangspa-Kourpo (*i. e.*, Brahma himself), and others. These masks, as a lama sitting near me explained to us, represented six classes of beings subject to the metamorphoses; the gods, the demi-gods, men, animals, spirits and demons.

On each side of these personages, who advanced gravely, marched other masks, costumed in silks of brilliant hues and wearing on their heads golden crowns, fashioned with six lotus-like flowers on each, surmounted by a tall dart in the centre. Each of these masks carried a drum.

These disguises made three turns about the masts, to the sound of a noisy and incoherent music, and then seated themselves on the ground, around Thlogan-Pondma-

Jungnas, a god with three eyes, who gravely introduced two fingers into his mouth and emitted a shrill whistle. At this signal, young men dressed in warrior costumes—with ribbon-decked bells dangling about their legs—came with measured steps from the temple. Their heads were covered by enormous green masks, from which floated triangular red flags, and they, too, carried tambourines. Making a diabolical din, they whirled and danced about the gods seated on the ground. Two big fellows accompanying them, who were dressed in tight clown costumes, executed all kinds of grotesque contortions and acrobatic feats, by which they won plaudits and shouts of laughter from the spectators.

Another group of disguises—of which the principal features were red mitres and yellow

pantaloons—came out of the temple, with bells and tambourines in their hands, and seated themselves opposite the gods, as representatives of the highest powers next to divinity. Lastly there entered upon the scene a lot of red and brown masks, with a "third eye" painted on their breasts. With those who had preceded them, they formed two long lines of dancers, who to the thrumming of their many tambourines, the measured music of the trumpets and drums, and the jingling of a myriad of bells, performed a dance, approaching and receding from each other, whirling in circles, forming by twos in a column and breaking from that formation to make new combinations, pausing occasionally to make reverent obeisance before the gods.

After a time this spectacular excitement—the noisy monotony of which began to weary

me—calmed down a little; gods, demigods, kings, men and spirits got up, and followed by all the other maskers, directed themselves toward the temple door, whence issued at once, meeting them, a lot of men admirably disguised as skeletons. All those sorties were calculated and pre-arranged, and every one of them had its particular significance. The *cortêge* of dancers gave way to the skeletons, who advanced with measured steps, in silence, to the masts, where they stopped and made a concerted clicking with pieces of wood hanging at their sides, simulating perfectly the rattling of dry bones and gnashing of teeth. Twice they went in a circle around the masts, marching in time to low taps on the drums, and then joined in a lugubrious religious chant. Having once more made the concerted rattling of their artificial bones

and jaws, they executed some contortions painful to witness and together stopped.

Then they seized upon an image of the Enemy of Man—made of some sort of brittle paste—which had been placed at the foot of one of the masts. This they broke in pieces and scattered, and the oldest men among the spectators, rising from their places, picked up the fragments which they handed to the skeletons—an action supposed to signify that they would soon be ready to join the bony crew in the cemetery.

The chief lama, approaching me, tendered an invitation to accompany him to the principal terrace and partake of the festal "tchang;" which I accepted with pleasure, for my head was dizzy from the long spectacle.

We crossed the court and climbed a staircase — obstructed with prayer-wheels, as usual—passed two rooms where there were many images of gods, and came out upon the terrace, where I seated myself upon a bench opposite the venerable lama, whose eyes sparkled with spirit.

Three lamas brought pitchers of tchang, which they poured into small copper cups, that were offered first to the chief lama, then to me and my servants.

"Did you enjoy our little festival?" the lama asked me.

"I found it very enjoyable and am still impressed by the spectacle I have witnessed. But, to tell the truth, I never suspected for a moment that Buddhism, in these religious ceremonies, could display such a visible, not to say noisy, exterior form."

"There is no religion, the ceremonies of which are not surrounded with more theatrical forms," the lama answered. "This is a ritualistic phase which does not by any means violate the fundamental principles of Buddhism. It is a practical means for maintaining in the ignorant mass obedience to and love for the one Creator, just as a child is beguiled by toys to do the will of its parents. The ignorant mass is the child of The Father."

"But what is the meaning," I said to him, "of all those masks, costumes, bells, dances, and, generally, of this entire performance, which seems to be executed after a prescribed programme?"

"We have many similar festivals in the year," answered the lama, "and we arrange particular ones to represent 'mysteries,' sus-

ceptible of pantomimic presentation, in which each actor is allowed considerable latitude of action, in the movements and jests he likes, conforming, nevertheless, to the circumstances and to the leading idea. Our mysteries are simply pantomimes calculated to show the veneration offered to the gods, which veneration sustains and cheers the soul of man, who is prone to anxious contemplation of inevitable death and the life to come. The actors receive the dresses from the cloister and they play according to general indications, which leave them much liberty of individual action. The general effect produced is, no doubt, very beautiful, but it is a matter for the spectators themselves to divine the signification of one or another action. You, too, have recourse sometimes to similar devices, which, however, do not

in the least violate the principle of monotheism."

"Pardon me," I remarked, "but this multitude of idols with which your gonpas abound, is a flagrant violation of that principle."

"As I have told you," replied the lama to my interruption, "man will always be in childhood. He sees and feels the grandeur of nature and understands everything presented to his senses, but he neither sees nor divines the Great Soul which created and animates all things. Man has always sought for tangible things. It was not possible for him to believe long in that which escaped his material senses. He has racked his brain to and means for contemplating the Creator; has endeavored to enter into direct relations with him who has done him so much good,

and also, as he erroneously believes, so much evil. For this reason he began to adore every phase of nature from which he received benefits. We see a striking example of this in the ancient Egyptians, who adored animals, trees, stones, the winds and the rain. Other peoples, who were more sunk in ignorance, seeing that the results of the wind were not always beneficent, and that the rain did not inevitably bring good harvests, and that the animals were not willingly subservient to man, began to seek for direct intermediaries between themselves and the great mysterious and unfathomable power of the Creator. Therefore they made for themselves idols, which they regarded as indifferent to things concerning them, but to whose interposition in their behalf, they might always recur. From remotest antiquity to our own days,

man was ever inclined only to tangible realities.

"While seeking a route to lead their feet to the Creator, the Assyrians turned their eyes toward the stars, which they contemplated without the power of attaining them. The Guebers have conserved the same belief to our days. In their nullity and spiritual blindness, men are incapable of conceiving the invisible spiritual bond which unites them to the great Divinity, and this explains why they have always sought for palpable things, which were in the domain of the senses, and by doing which they minimized the divine principle. Nevertheless, they have dared to attribute to their visible and man-made images a divine and eternal existence. We can see the same fact in Brahminism, where man, given to his inclination for exterior

forms, has created, little by little, and not all at once, an army of gods and demi-gods. The Israelites may be said to have demonstrated, in the most flagrant way, the love of man for everything which is concrete. In spite of a series of striking miracles accomplished by the great Creator, who is the same for all the peoples, the Jewish people could not help making a god of metal in the very minute when their prophet Mossa spoke to them of the Creator! Buddhism has passed through the same modifications. Our great reformer, Sakya-Muni, inspired by the Supreme Judge, understood truly the one and indivisible Brahma, and forbade his disciples attempting to manufacture images in imaginary semblance of him. He had openly broken from the polytheistic Brahmins, and appreciated the purity, oneness and immor-

tality of Brahma. The success he achieved by his teachings in making disciples among the people, brought upon him persecution by the Brahmins, who, in the creation of new gods, had found a source of personal revenue, and who, contrary to the law of God, treated the people in a despotic manner. Our first sacred teachers, to whom we give the name of buddhas—which means, learned men or saints—because the great Creator has incarnated in them, settled in different countries of the globe. As their teachings attacked especially the tyranny of the Brahmins and the misuse they made of the idea of God—of which they indeed made a veritable business—almost all the Buddhistic converts, they who followed the doctrines of those great teachers, were among the common people of China and India. Among those teachers,

particular reverence is felt for the Buddha, Sakya-Muni, known in China also under the name of Fô, who lived three thousand years ago, and whose teachings brought all China back into the path of the true God; and the Buddha, Gautama, who lived two thousand five hundred years ago, and converted almost half the Hindus to the knowledge of the impersonal, indivisible and only God, besides whom there is none.

"Buddhism is divided into many sects which, by the way, differ only in certain religious ceremonies, the basis of the doctrine being everywhere the same. The Thibetan Buddhists, who are called 'lamaists,' separated themselves from the Fô-ists fifteen hundred years ago. Until that time we had formed part of the worshippers of the Buddha, Fô-Sakya-Muni, who was the first to collect all

the laws compiled by the various buddhas preceding him, when the great schism took place in the bosom of Brahmanism. Later on, a Khoutoukhte-Mongol translated into Chinese the books of the great Buddha, for which the Emperor of China rewarded him by bestowing upon him the title of 'Go-Chi—' 'Preceptor of the King!' After his death, this title was given to the Dalai-Lama of Thibet. Since that epoch, all the titularies of this position have borne the title of Go-Chi. Our religion is called the Lamaic one—from the word 'lama,' superior. It admits of two classes of monks, the red and the yellow. The former may marry, and they recognize the authority of the Bantsine, who resides in Techow Loumba, and is chief of the civil administration in Thibet. We, the yellow lamas, have taken the vow of celibacy, and

our direct chief is the Dalai-Lama. This is the difference which separates the two religious orders, the respective rituals of which are identical."

"Do all perform mysteries similar to that which I have just witnessed?"

"Yes; with a few exceptions. Formerly these festivals were celebrated with very solemn pomp, but since the conquest of Ladak our convents have been, more than once, pillaged and our wealth taken away. Now we content ourselves with simple garments and bronze utensils, while in Thibet you see but golden robes and gold utensils."

"In a visit which I recently made to a gonpa, one of the lamas told me of a prophet, or, as you call him, a buddha, by the name of Issa. Could you not tell me anything about him?" I asked my interlocutor, seiz-

ing this favorable moment to start the subject which interested me so greatly.

"The name Issa is very much respected among the Buddhists," he replied, "but he is only known by the chief lamas, who have read the scrolls relating to his life. There have existed an infinite number of buddhas like Issa, and the 84,000 scrolls existing are filled brim full of details concerning each one of them. But very few persons have read the one-hundredth part of those memoirs. In conformity with established custom, every disciple or lama who visits Lhassa makes a gift of one or several copies, from the scrolls there, to the convent to which he belongs. Our gonpa, among others, possesses already a great number, which I read in my leisure hours. Among them are the memoirs of the life and acts of the Buddha Issa, who preached

the same doctrine in India and among the sons of Israel, and who was put to death by the Pagans, whose descendants, later on, adopted the beliefs he spread,—and those beliefs are yours.

"The great Buddha, the soul of the Universe, is the incarnation of Brahma. He, almost always, remains immobile, containing in himself all things, being in himself the origin of all and his breath vivifying the world. He has left man to the control of his own forces, but, at certain epochs, lays aside his inaction and puts on a human form that he may, as their teacher and guide, rescue his creatures from impending destruction. In the course of his terrestrial existence in the similitude of man, Buddha creates a new world in the hearts of erring men; then he leaves the earth, to become once more an

invisible being and resume his condition of perfect bliss. Three thousand years ago, Buddha incarnated in the celebrated Prince Sakya-Muni, re-affirming and propagating the doctrines taught by him in his twenty preceding incarnations. Twenty-five hundred years ago, the Great Soul of the World incarnated anew in Gautama, laying the foundation of a new world in Burmah, Siam and different islands. Soon afterward, Buddhism began to penetrate China, through the persevering efforts of the sages, who devoted themselves to the propagation of the sacred doctrine, and under Ming-Ti, of the Honi dynasty, nearly 2,050 years ago, the teachings of Sakya-Muni were adopted by the people of that country. Simultaneously with the appearance of Buddhism in China, the same doctrines began to spread among the

Israelites. It is about 2,000 years ago that the Perfect Being, awaking once more for a short time from his inaction, incarnated in the new-born child of a poor family. It was his will that this little child should enlighten the unhappy upon the life of the world to come and bring erring men back into the path of truth; showing to them, by his own example, the way they could best return to the primitive morality and purity of our race. When this sacred child attained a certain age, he was brought to India, where, until he attained to manhood, he studied the laws of the great Buddha, who dwells eternally in heaven."

"In what language are written the principal scrolls bearing upon the life of Issa?" I asked, rising from my seat, for I saw that my interesting interlocutor evidenced fatigue,

and had just given a twirl to his prayer-wheel, as if to hint the closing of the conversation.

"The original scrolls brought from India to Nepaul, and from Nepaul to Thibet, relating to the life of Issa, are written in the Pali language and are actually in Lhassa; but a copy in our language—I mean the Thibetan—is in this convent."

"How is Issa looked upon in Thibet? Has he the repute of a saint?"

"The people are not even aware that he ever existed. Only the principal lamas, who know of him through having studied the scrolls in which his life is related, are familiar with his name; but, as his doctrine does not constitute a canonical part of Buddhism, and the worshippers of Issa do not recognize the authority of the Dalai-Lama, the prophet

Issa—with many others like him—is not recognized in Thibet as one of the principal saints."

"Would you commit a sin in reciting your copy of the life of Issa to a stranger?" I asked him.

"That which belongs to God," he answered me, "belongs also to man. Our duty requires us to cheerfully devote ourselves to the propagation of His doctrine. Only, I do not, at present, know where that manuscript is. If you ever visit our gonpa again, I shall take pleasure in showing it to you."

At this moment two monks entered, and uttered to the chief lama a few words unintelligible to me.

"I am called to the sacrifices. Will you kindly excuse me?" said he to me, and,

with a salute, turned to the door and disappeared.

I could do no better than withdraw and lie down in the chamber which was assigned to me, and where I spent the night.

In the evening of the next day I was again in Leh—thinking of how to get back to the convent. Two days later I sent, by a messenger, to the chief lama, as presents, a watch, an alarm clock, and a thermometer. At the same time I sent the message that before leaving Ladak I would probably return to the convent, in the hope that he would permit me to see the manuscript which had been the subject of our conversation. It was now my purpose to gain Kachmyr and return from there, some time later,

to Himis. But fate made a different decision for me.

In passing a mountain, on a height of which is perched the gonpa of Piatak, my horse made a false step, throwing me to the ground so violently that my right leg was broken below the knee.

It was impossible to continue my journey, I was not inclined to return to Leh; and seeking the hospitality of the gonpa of Piatak was not, from the appearance of the cloister, an enticing prospect. My best recourse would be to return to Himis, then only about half a day's journey distant, and I ordered my servants to transport me there. They bandaged my broken leg—an operation which caused me great pain—and lifted me into the saddle. One carrier walked by my side, supporting the weight of the injured

member, while another led my horse. At a late hour of the evening we reached the door of the convent of Himis.

When informed of my accident, the kind monks came out to receive me and, with a wealth of extraordinary precautions of tenderness, I was carried inside, and, in one of their best rooms, installed upon an improvised bed, consisting of a mountain of soft fabrics, with the naturally-to-be-expected prayer-cylinder beside me. All this was done for me under the personal supervision of their chief lama, who, with affectionate sympathy, pressed the hand I gave him in expression of my thanks for his kindness.

In the morning, I myself bound around the injured limb little oblong pieces of wood, held by cords, to serve as splints. Then I remained perfectly quiescent and nature was

not slow in her reparative work. Within two days my condition was so far improved that I could, had it been necessary, have left the gonpa and directed myself slowly toward India in search of a surgeon to complete my cure.

While a boy kept in motion the prayer-barrel near my bed, the venerable lama who ruled the convent entertained me with many interesting stories. Frequently he took from their box the alarm clock and the watch, that I might illustrate to him the process of winding them and explain to him their uses. At length, yielding to my ardent insistence, he brought me two big books, the large leaves of which were of paper yellow with age, and from them read to me the biography of Issa, which I carefully transcribed in my travelling note-book according to the translation

made by the interpreter. This curious document is compiled under the form of isolated verses, which, as placed, very often had no apparent connection with, or relation to each other.

On the third day, my condition was so far improved as to permit the prosecution of my journey. Having bound up my leg as well as possible, I returned, across Kachmyr, to India; a slow journey, of twenty days, filled with intolerable pain. Thanks, however, to a litter, which a French gentleman, M. Peicheau, had kindly sent to me (my gratitude for which I take this occasion to express), and to an ukase of the Grand Vizier of the Maharajah of Kachmyr, ordering the local authorities to provide me with carriers, I reached Srinagar, and left almost immedi-

ately, being anxious to gain India before the first snows fell.

In Muré I encountered another Frenchman, Count André de Saint Phall, who was making a journey of recreation across Hindostan. During the whole course, which we made together, to Bombay, the young count demonstrated a touching solicitude for me, and sympathy for the excruciating pain I suffered from my broken leg and the fever induced by its torture. I cherish for him sincere gratitude, and shall never forget the friendly care which I received upon my arrival in Bombay from the Marquis de Morés, the Vicomte de Breteul, M. Monod, of the Comptoir d'Escompte, M. Moët, acting consul, and all the members of the very sympathetic French colony there.

During a long time I revolved in my mind

the purpose of publishing the memoirs of the life of Jesus Christ found by me in Himis, of which I have spoken, but other interests absorbed my attention and delayed it. Only now, after having passed long nights of wakefulness in the co-ordination of my notes and grouping the verses conformably to the march of the recital, imparting to the work, as a whole, a character of unity, I resolve to let this curious chronicle see the light.

THE LIFE OF SAINT ISSA.

"BEST OF THE SONS OF MEN."

I.

1. The earth trembled and the heavens wept, because of the great crime committed in the land of Israel.

2. For there was tortured and murdered the great and just Issa, in whom was manifest the soul of the Universe;

3. Which had incarnated in a simple mortal, to benefit men and destroy the evil spirit in them;

4. To lead back to peace, love and happiness, man, degraded by his sins, and recall him to the one and indivisible Creator whose mercy is infinite.

5. The merchants coming from Israel have given the following account of what has occurred:

II.

1. The people of Israel—who inhabit a fertile country producing two harvests a year and affording pasture for large herds of cattle—by their sins brought down upon themselves the anger of the Lord;

2. Who inflicted upon them terrible chastisements, taking from them their land, their cattle and their wealth. They were carried away into slavery by the rich and mighty Pharaohs who then ruled the land of Egypt.

3. The Israelites were, by the Pharaohs, treated worse than beasts, condemned to hard labor and put in irons; their bodies were covered with wounds and sores; they

were not permitted to live under a roof, and were starved to death;

4. That they might be maintained in a state of continual terror and deprived of all human resemblance;

5. And in this great calamity, the Israelites, remembering their Celestial Protector, implored his forgiveness and mercy.

6. At that period reigned in Egypt an illustrious Pharaoh, who was renowned for his many victories, immense riches, and the gigantic palaces he had erected by the labor of his slaves.

7. This Pharaoh had two sons, the younger of whom, named Mossa, had acquired much knowledge from the sages of Israel.

8. And Mossa was beloved by all in Egypt, for his kindness of heart and the pity he showed to all sufferers.

9. When Mossa saw that the Israelites, in spite of their many sufferings, had not forsaken their God, and refused to worship the gods of Egypt, created by the hands of man.

10. He also put his faith in their invisible God, who did not suffer them to betray Him, despite their ever growing weakness.

11. And the teachers among Israel animated Mossa in his zeal, and prayed of him that he would intercede with his father, Pharaoh, in favor of their co-religionists.

12. Prince Mossa went before his father, begging him to lighten the burden of the unhappy people; Pharaoh, however, became incensed with rage, and ordered that they should be tormented more than before.

13. And it came to pass that Egypt was visited by a great calamity. The plague decimated young and old, the healthy and the

sick; and Pharaoh beheld in this the resentment of his own gods against him.

14. But Prince Mossa said to his father that it was the God of his slaves who thus interposed on behalf of his wretched people, and avenged them upon the Egyptians.

15. Thereupon, Pharaoh commanded Mossa, his son, to gather all the Israelite slaves, and lead them away, and found, at a great distance from the capital, another city where he should rule over them.

16. Then Mossa made known to the Hebrew slaves that he had obtained their freedom in the name of his and their God, the God of Israel; and with them he left the city and departed from the land of Egypt.

17. He led them back to the land which, because of their many sins, had been taken from them. There he gave them laws and

admonished them to pray always to God, the indivisible Creator, whose kindness is infinite.

18. After Prince Mossa's death, the Israelites observed rigorously his laws; and God rewarded them for the ills to which they had been subjected in Egypt.

19. Their kingdom became one of the most powerful on earth; their kings made themselves renowned for their treasures, and peace reigned in Israel.

III.

1. The glory of Israel's wealth spread over the whole earth, and the surrounding nations became envious.

2. But the Most High himself led the victorious arms of the Hebrews, and the Pagans did not dare to attack them.

3. Unfortunately, man is prone to err, and the fidelity of the Israelites to their God was not of long duration.

4. Little by little they forgot the favors he had bestowed upon them; rarely invoked his name, and sought rather protection by the magicians and sorcerers.

5. The kings and the chiefs among the people substituted their own laws for those given by Mossa; the temple of God and the observances of their ancient faith were neglected; the people addicted themselves to sensual gratifications and lost their original purity.

6. Many centuries had elapsed since their exodus from Egypt, when God bethought himself of again inflicting chastisement upon them.

7. Strangers invaded Israel, devastated

the land, destroyed the villages, and carried their inhabitants away into captivity.

8. At last came the Pagans from over the sea, from the land of Romeles. These made themselves masters of the Hebrews, and placed over them their army chiefs, who governed in the name of Cæsar.

9. They defiled the temples, forced the inhabitants to cease the worship of the indivisible God, and compelled them to sacrifice to the heathen gods.

10. They made common soldiers of those who had been men of rank; the women became their prey, and the common people, reduced to slavery, were carried away by thousands over the sea.

11. The children were slain, and soon, in the whole land, there was naught heard but weeping and lamentation.

12. In this extreme distress, the Israelites once more remembered their great God, implored his mercy and prayed for his forgiveness. Our Father, in his inexhaustible clemency, heard their prayer.

IV.

1. At that time the moment had come for the compassionate Judge to re-incarnate in a human form ;

2. And the eternal Spirit, resting in a state of complete inaction and supreme bliss, awakened and separated from the eternal Being, for an undetermined period,

3. So that, in human form, He might teach man to identify himself with the Divinity and attain to eternal felicity ;

4. And to show, by His example, how man can attain moral purity and free his soul from the domination of the physical senses, so that it may achieve the perfection neces sary for it to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, which is immutable and where bliss eternal reigns.

5. Soon after, a marvellous child was born in the land of Israel. God himself spoke, through the mouth of this child, of the mis-eries of the body and the grandeur of the soul.

6. The parents of the infant were poor peo-ple, who belonged to a family noted for great piety; who forgot the greatness of their ancestors in celebrating the name of the Creator and giving thanks to Him for the trials which He had sent upon them.

7. To reward them for adhering to the

path of truth, God blessed the first-born of this family ; chose him for His elect, and sent him to sustain the fallen and comfort the afflicted.

8. The divine child, to whom the name Issa was given, commenced in his tender years to talk of the only and indivisible God, exhorting the strayed souls to repent and purify themselves from the sins of which they had become guilty.

9. People came from all parts to hear him, and marvelled at the discourses which came from his infantile mouth ; and all Israel agreed that the Spirit of the Eternal dwelt in this child.

10. When Issa was thirteen years old, the age at which an Israelite is expected to marry,

11. The modest house of his industrious

parents became a meeting-place of the rich and illustrious, who were anxious to have as a son-in-law the young Issa, who was already celebrated for the edifying discourses he made in the name of the All-Powerful.

12. Then Issa secretly absented himself from his father's house; left Jerusalem, and, in a train of merchants, journeyed toward the Sindh,

13. With the object of perfecting himself in the knowledge of the word of God and the study of the laws of the great Buddhas.

V.

1. In his fourteenth year, young Issa, the Blessed One, came this side of the Sindh and settled among the Aryas, in the country beloved by God.

2. Fame spread the name of the marvellous youth along the northern Sindh, and when he came through the country of the five streams and Radjipoutan, the devotees of the god Djaïne asked him to stay among them.

3. But he left the deluded worshippers of Djaïne and went to Djagguernat, in the country of Orsis, where repose the mortal remains of Vyassa-Krishna, and where the white priests of Brahma welcomed him joyfully.

4. They taught him to read and to understand the Vedas, to cure physical ills by means of prayers, to teach and to expound the sacred Scriptures, to drive out evil desires from man and make him again in the likeness of God.

5. He spent six years in Djagguernat, in

Radjagriha, in Benares, and in other holy cities. The common people loved Issa, for he lived in peace with the Vaisyas and the Sudras, to whom he taught the Holy Scriptures.

6. But the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas told him that they were forbidden by the great Para-Brahma to come near to those who were created from his belly and his feet;*

7. That the Vaisyas might only hear the recital of the Vedas, and this only on the festal days, and

8. That the Sudras were not only forbidden to attend the reading of the Vedas, but even to look on them; for they were condemned to perpetual servitude, as slaves of the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas and even the Vaisyas.

* The Vaisyas and Sudras castes.

9. "Death alone can enfranchise them from their servitude," has said Para-Brahma. "Leave them, therefore, and come to adore with us the gods, whom you will make angry if you disobey them."

10. But Issa, disregarding their words, remained with the Sudras, preaching against the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas.

11. He declaimed strongly against man's arrogating to himself the authority to deprive his fellow-beings of their human and spiritual rights. "Verily," he said, "God has made no difference between his children, who are all alike dear to Him."

12. Issa denied the divine inspiration of the Vedas and the Puranas, for, as he taught his followers,—"One law has been given to man to guide him in his actions:

13. "Fear the Lord, thy God; bend thy

knees only before Him and bring to Him only the offerings which come from thy earnings."

14. Issa denied the Trimurti and the incarnation of Para-Brahma in Vishnu, Siva, and other gods; "for," said he:

15. "The eternal Judge, the eternal Spirit, constitutes the only and indivisible soul of the universe, and it is this soul alone which creates, contains and vivifies all.

16. "He alone has willed and created. He alone has existed from eternity, and His existence will be without end; there is no one like unto Him either in the heavens or on the earth.

17. "The great Creator has divided His power with no other being; far less with inanimate objects, as you have been taught to

believe, for He alone is omnipotent and all-sufficient.

18. "He willed, and the world was. By one divine thought, He reunited the waters and separated them from the dry land of the globe. He is the cause of the mysterious life of man, into whom He has breathed part of His divine Being.

19. "And He has put under subjection to man, the lands, the waters, the beasts and everything which He created, and which He himself preserves in immutable order, allotting to each its proper duration.

20. "The anger of God will soon break forth upon man; for he has forgotten his Creator; he has filled His temples with abominations; and he adores a multitude of creatures which God has subordinated to him;

21. "And to gain favor with images of

stone and metal, he sacrifices human beings in whom dwells part of the Spirit of the Most High;

22. "And he humiliates those who work in the sweat of their brows, to gain favor in the eyes of the idler who sitteth at a sumptuous table.

23. "Those who deprive their brothers of divine happiness will themselves be deprived of it; and the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas shall become the Sudras of the Sudras, with whom the Eternal will stay forever.

24. "In the day of judgment the Sudras and the Vaisyas will be forgiven for that they knew not the light, while God will let loose his wrath upon those who arrogated his authority."

25. The Vaisyas and the Sudras were filled with great admiration, and asked Issa how

they should pray, in order not to lose their hold upon eternal life.

26. "Pray not to idols, for they cannot hear you; hearken not to the Vedas where the truth is altered; be humble and humiliate not your fellow-man.

27. "Help the poor, support the weak, do evil to none; covet not that which ye have not and which belongs to others."

VI.

1. The white priests and the warriors,* who had learned of Issa's discourse to the Sudras, resolved upon his death, and sent their servants to find the young teacher and slay him.

2. But Issa, warned by the Sudras of his

* Brahmins and Kshatriyas.

danger, left by night Djagguernat, gained the mountain, and settled in the country of the Gautamides, where the great Buddha Sakya-Muni came to the world, among a people who worshipped the only and sublime Brahma.

3. When the just Issa had acquired the Pali language, he applied himself to the study of the sacred scrolls of the Sutras.

4. After six years of study, Issa, whom the Buddha had elected to spread his holy word, could perfectly expound the sacred scrolls.

5. He then left Nepaul and the Himalaya mountains, descended into the valley of Radjipoutan and directed his steps toward the West, everywhere preaching to the people the supreme perfection attainable by man ;

6. And the good he must do to his fellow-

men, which is the sure means of speedy union with the eternal Spirit. "He who has recovered his primitive purity," said Issa, "shall die with his transgressions forgiven and have the right to contemplate the majesty of God."

7. When the divine Issa traversed the territories of the Pagans, he taught that the adoration of visible gods was contrary to natural law.

8. "For to man," said he, "it has not been given to see the image of God, and it behooves him not to make for himself a multitude of divinities in the imagined likeness of the Eternal.

9. "Moreover, it is against human conscience to have less regard for the greatness of divine purity, than for animals or works of stone or metal made by the hands of man.

10. "The eternal Lawgiver is One; there are no other Gods than He; He has parted the world with none, nor had He any counsellor.

11. "Even as a father shows kindness toward his children, so will God judge men after death, in conformity with His merciful laws. He will never humiliate his child by casting his soul for chastisement into the body of a beast.

12. "The heavenly laws," said the Creator, through the mouth of Issa, "are opposed to the immolation of human sacrifices to a statue or an animal; for I, the God, have sacrificed to man all the animals and all that the world contains.

13. "Everything has been sacrificed to man, who is directly and intimately united to me, his Father; therefore, shall the man be

severely judged and punished, by my law, who causes the sacrifice of my children.

14. "Man is naught before the eternal Judge; as the animal is before man.

15. "Therefore, I say unto you, leave your idols and perform not ceremonies which separate you from your Father and bind you to the priests, from whom heaven has turned away.

16. "For it is they who have led you away from the true God, and by superstitions and cruelty perverted the spirit and made you blind to the knowledge of the truth."

VII.

1. The words of Issa spread among the Pagans, through whose country he passed, and the inhabitants abandoned their idols.

2. Seeing which, the priests demanded of him who thus glorified the name of the true God, that he should, in the presence of the people, prove the charges he made against them, and demonstrate the vanity of their idols.

3. And Issa answered them: "If your idols, or the animals you worship, really possess the supernatural powers you claim, let them strike me with a thunder-bolt before you!"

4. "Why dost not thou perform a miracle," replied the priests, "and let thy God confound ours, if He is greater than they?"

5. But Issa said: "The miracles of our God have been wrought from the first day when the universe was created; and are performed every day and every moment; whoso

sees them not is deprived of one of the most beautiful gifts of life.

6. "And it is not on inanimate objects of stone, metal or wood that He will let His anger fall, but on the men who worship them, and who, therefore, for their salvation, must destroy the idols they have made.

7. "Even as a stone and a grain of sand, which are naught before man, await patiently their use by Him,

8. "In like manner, man, who is naught before God, must await in resignation His pleasure for a manifestation of His favor.

9. "But woe to you! ye adversaries of men, if it is not the favor you await, but rather the wrath of the Most High; woe to you, if you demand that He attest His power by a miracle!

10. "For it is not the idols which He will

destroy in His wrath, but those by whom they were created; their hearts will be the prey of an eternal fire and their flesh shall be given to the beasts of prey.

11. "God will drive away the contaminated animals from His flocks; but will take to Himself those who strayed because they knew not the heavenly part within them."

12. When the Pagans saw that the power of their priests was naught, they put faith in the words of Issa. Fearing the anger of the true God, they broke their idols to pieces and caused their priests to flee from among them.

13. Issa furthermore taught the Pagans that they should not endeavor to see the eternal Spirit with their eyes; but to perceive Him with their hearts, and make

themselves worthy of His favors by the purity of their souls.

14. "Not only," he said to them, "must ye refrain from offering human sacrifices, but ye may not lay on the altar any creature to which life has been given, for all things created are for man.

15. "Withhold not from your neighbor his just due, for this would be like stealing from him what he had earned in the sweat of his brow.

16. "Deceive none, that ye may not yourselves be deceived; seek to justify yourselves before the last judgment, for then it will be too late.

17. "Be not given to debauchery, for it is a violation of the law of God.

18. "That you may attain to supreme bliss ye must not only purify yourselves, but

must also guide others into the path that will enable them to regain their primitive innocence."

VIII.

1. The countries round about were filled with the renown of Issa's preachings, and when he came unto Persia, the priests grew afraid and forbade the people hearing him;

2. Nevertheless, the villages received him with joy, and the people hearkened intently to his words, which, being seen by the priests, caused them to order that he should be arrested and brought before their High Priest, who asked him:

3. "Of what new God dost thou speak? Knowest thou not, unfortunate man that thou art! that Saint Zoroaster is the only Just

One, to whom alone was vouchsafed the honor of receiving revelations from the Most High;

4. "By whose command the angels compiled His Word in laws for the governance of His people, which were given to Zoroaster in Paradise?

5. "Who, then, art thou, who darest to utter blasphemies against our God and sow doubt in the hearts of believers?"

6. And Issa said to them: "I preach no new God, but our celestial Father, who has existed before the beginning and will exist until after the end.

7. "Of Him I have spoken to the people, who—even as innocent children—are incapable of comprehending God by their own intelligence, or fathoming the sublimity of the divine Spirit;

8. "But, as the new-born child in the night recognizes the mother's breast, so your people, held in the darkness of error by your pernicious doctrines and religious ceremonies, have recognized instinctively their Father, in the Father whose prophet I am.

9. "The eternal Being says to your people, by my mouth, 'Ye shall not adore the sun, for it is but a part of the universe which I have created for man;

10. "It rises to warm you during your work; it sets to accord to you the rest that I have ordained.

11. "To me only ye owe all that ye possess, all that surrounds you and that is above and below you.'"

12. "But," said the priests, "how could the people live according to your rules if they had no teachers?"

13. Whereupon Issa answered: "So long as they had no priests, they were governed by the natural law and conserved the simplicity of their souls;

14. "Their souls were in God and to commune with the Father they had not to have recourse to the intermediation of idols, or animals, or fire, as taught by you.

15. "Ye pretend that man must adore the sun, and the Genii of Good and Evil. But I say unto you that your doctrine is pernicious. The sun does not act spontaneously, but by the will of the invisible Creator, who has given to it being."

16. "Who, then, has caused that this star lights the day, warms man at his work and vivifies the seeds sown in the ground?"

17. "The eternal Spirit is the soul of everything animate, and you commit a great

sin in dividing Him into the Spirit of Evil and the Spirit of Good, for there is no God other than the God of Good.

18. "And He, like to the father of a family, does only good to His children, to whom He forgives their transgressions if they repent of them.

19. "And the Spirit of Evil dwells upon earth, in the hearts of those who turn the children of God away from the right path.

20. "Therefore, I say unto you; Fear the day of judgment, for God will inflict a terrible chastisement upon all those who have led His children astray and beguiled them with superstitions and errors;

21. "Upon those who have blinded them who saw; who have brought contagion to the well; who have taught the worship of

those things which God made to be subject to man, or to aid him in his works.

22. "Your doctrine is the fruit of your error in seeking to bring near to you the God of Truth, by creating for yourselves false gods."

23. When the Magi heard these words, they feared to themselves do him harm, but at night, when the whole city slept, they brought him outside the walls and left him on the highway, in the hope that he would not fail to become the prey of wild beasts.

24. But, protected by the Lord our God, Saint Issa continued on his way, without accident.

IX.

1. Issa—whom the Creator had selected to recall to the worship of the true God, men

sunk in sin—was twenty-nine years old when he arrived in the land of Israel.

2. Since the departure therefrom of Issa, the Pagans had caused the Israelites to endure more atrocious sufferings than before, and they were filled with despair.

3. Many among them had begun to neglect the laws of their God and those of Mossa, in the hope of winning the favor of their brutal conquerors.

4. But Issa, notwithstanding their unhappy condition, exhorted his countrymen not to despair, because the day of their redemption from the yoke of sin was near, and he himself, by his example, confirmed their faith in the God of their fathers.

5. "Children, yield not yourselves to despair," said the celestial Father to them, through the mouth of Issa, "for I have heard

your lamentations, and your cries have reached my ears.

6. "Weep not, oh, my beloved sons! for your griefs have touched the heart of your Father and He has forgiven you, as He forgave your ancestors.

7. "Forsake not your families to plunge into debauchery; stain not the nobility of your souls; adore not idols which cannot but remain deaf to your supplications.

8. "Fill my temple with your hope and your patience, and do not adjure the religion of your forefathers, for I have guided them and bestowed upon them of my beneficence.

9. "Lift up those who are fallen; feed the hungry and help the sick, that ye may be altogether pure and just in the day of the last judgment which I prepare for you."

10. The Israelites came in multitudes to

listen to Issa's words; and they asked him where they should thank their Heavenly Father, since their enemies had demolished their temples and robbed them of their sacred vessels.

11. Issa told them that God cared not for temples erected by human hands, but that human hearts were the true temples of God.

12. "Enter into your temple, into your heart; illuminate it with good thoughts, with patience and the unshakeable faith which you owe to your Father.

13. "And your sacred vessels! they are your hands and your eyes. Look to do that which is agreeable to God, for in doing good to your fellow-men, you perform a ceremony that embellishes the temple wherein abideth Him who has created you.

14. "For God has created you in His own image, innocent, with pure souls, and hearts filled with kindness and not made for the planning of evil, but to be the sanctuaries of love and justice.

15. "Therefore, I say unto you, soil not your hearts with evil, for in them the Eternal Being abides.

16. "When ye do works of devotion and love, let them be with full hearts, and see that the motives of your actions be not hopes of gain or self-interest;

17. For actions, so impelled, will not bring you nearer to salvation, but lead to a state of moral degradation wherein theft, lying and murder pass for generous deeds."

X.

1. Issa went from one city to another,

strengthening by the word of God the courage of the Israelites, who were near to succumbing under their weight of woe, and thousands of the people followed him to hear his teachings.

2. But the chiefs of the cities were afraid of him and they informed the principal governor, residing in Jerusalem, that a man called Issa had arrived in the country, who by his sermons had arrayed the people against the authorities, and that multitudes, listening assiduously to him, neglected their labor; and, they added, he said that in a short time they would be free of their invader rulers.

3. Then Pilate, the Governor of Jerusalem, gave orders that they should lay hold of the preacher Issa and bring him before the judges. In order, however, not to excite the

anger of the populace, Pilate directed that he should be judged by the priests and scribes, the Hebrew elders, in their temple.

4. Meanwhile, Issa, continuing his preachings, arrived at Jerusalem, and the people, who already knew his fame, having learned of his coming, went out to meet him.

5. They greeted him respectfully and opened to him the doors of their temple, to hear from his mouth what he had said in other cities of Israel.

6. And Issa said to them: "The human race perishes, because of the lack of faith; for the darkness and the tempest have caused the flock to go astray and they have lost their shepherds.

7. "But the tempests do not rage forever and the darkness will not hide the light eternally; soon the sky will become serene,

the celestial light will again overspread the earth, and the strayed flock will re-unite around their shepherd.

8. "Wander not in the darkness, seeking the way, lest ye fall into the ditch ; but gather together, sustain one another, put your faith in your God and wait for the first glimmer of light to re-appear.

9. "He who sustains his neighbor, sustains himself ; and he who protects his family, protects all his people and his country.

10. "For, be assured that the day is near when you will be delivered from the darkness ; you will be re-united into one family and your enemy will tremble with fear, he who is ignorant of the favor of the great God."

11. The priests and the elders who heard him, filled with admiration for his language,

asked him if it was true that he had sought to raise the people against the authorities of the country, as had been reported to the governor Pilate.

12. "Can one raise against estrayed men, to whom darkness has hidden their road and their door?" answered Issa. "I have but forewarned the unhappy, as I do here in this temple, that they should no longer advance on the dark road, for an abyss opens before their feet.

13. "The power of this earth is not of long duration and is subject to numberless changes. It would be of no avail for a man to rise in revolution against it, for one phase of it always succeeds another, and it is thus that it will go on until the extinction of human life.

14. "But do you not see that the powerful,

and the rich, sow among the children of Israel a spirit of rebellion against the eternal power of Heaven?"

15. Then the elders asked him: "Who art thou, and from what country hast thou come to us? We have not formerly heard thee spoken of and do not even know thy name!"

16. "I am an Israelite," answered Issa; "and on the day of my birth have seen the walls of Jerusalem, and have heard the sobs of my brothers reduced to slavery, and the lamentations of my sisters carried away by the Pagans;

17. "And my soul was afflicted when I saw that my brethren had forgotten the true God. When a child I left my father's house to go and settle among other people.

18. "But, having heard it said that my brethren suffered even greater miseries now,

I have come back to the land of my fathers, to recall my brethren to the faith of their ancestors, which teaches us patience upon earth in order to attain the perfect and supreme bliss above."

19. Then the wise old men put to him again this question: "We are told that thou disownest the laws of Mossa, and that thou teachest the people to forsake the temple of God?"

20. Whereupon Issa: "One does not demolish that which has been given by our Heavenly Father, and which has been destroyed by sinners. I have but enjoined the people to purify the heart of all stains, for it is the veritable temple of God.

21. "As regards the laws of Mossa, I have endeavored to re-establish them in the hearts of men; and I say unto you that ye ignore

their true meaning, for it is not vengeance but pardon which they teach. Their sense has been perverted."

XI.

1. When the priests and the elders heard Issa, they decided among themselves not to give judgment against him, for he had done no harm to any one, and, presenting themselves before Pilate—who was made Governor of Jerusalem by the Pagan king of the country of Romeles—they spake to him thus:

2. "We have seen the man whom thou chargest with inciting our people to revolt; we have heard his discourses and know that he is our countryman;

3. "But the chiefs of the cities have made to you false reports, for he is a just man, who

teaches the people the word of God. After interrogating him, we have allowed him to go in peace."

4. The governor thereupon became very angry, and sent his disguised spies to keep watch upon Issa and report to the authorities the least word he addressed to the people.

5. In the meantime, the holy Issa continued to visit the neighboring cities and preach the true way of the Lord, enjoining the Hebrews patience and promising them speedy deliverance.

6. And all the time great numbers of the people followed him wherever he went, and many did not leave him at all, but attached themselves to him and served him.

7. And Issa said: "Put not your faith in miracles performed by the hands of men, for He who rules nature is alone capable of do-

ing supernatural things, while man is impotent to arrest the wrath of the winds or cause the rain to fall.

8. "One miracle, however, is within the power of man to accomplish. It is, when his heart is filled with sincere faith, he resolves to root out from his mind all evil promptings and desires, and when, in order to attain this end, he ceases to walk the path of iniquity.

9. "All the things done without God are only gross errors, illusions and seductions, serving but to show how much the heart of the doer is full of presumption, falsehood and impurity.

10. "Put not your faith in oracles. God alone knows the future. He who has recourse to the diviners soils the temple of his heart and shows his lack of faith in his Creator.

11. "Belief in the diviners and their miracles destroys the innate simplicity of man and his childlike purity. An infernal power takes hold of him who so errs, and forces him to commit various sins and give himself to the worship of idols.

12. "But the Lord our God, to whom none can be equalled, is one omnipotent, omniscient and omnipresent; He alone possesses all wisdom and all light.

13. "To Him ye must address yourselves, to be comforted in your afflictions, aided in your works, healed in your sickness and whoso asks of Him, shall not ask in vain.

14. "The secrets of nature are in the hands of God, for the whole world, before it was made manifest, existed in the bosom of the divine thought, and has become material and visible by the will of the Most High.

15. "When ye pray to him, become again like little children, for ye know neither the past, nor the present, nor the future, and God is the Lord of Time."

XII.

1. "Just man," said to him the disguised spies of the Governor of Jerusalem, "tell us if we must continue to do the will of Cæsar, or expect our near deliverance?"

2. And Issa, who recognized the questioners as the apostate spies sent to follow him, replied to them: "I have not told you that you would be delivered from Cæsar; it is the soul sunk in error which will gain its deliverance.

3. "There cannot be a family without a head, and there cannot be order in a people

without a Cæsar, whom ye should implicitly obey, as he will be held to answer for his acts before the Supreme Tribunal."

4. "Does Cæsar possess a divine right?" the spies asked him again; "and is he the best of mortals?"

5. "There is no one 'the best' among human beings; but there are many bad, who —even as the sick need physicians—require the care of those chosen for that mission, in which must be used the means given by the sacred law of our Heavenly Father;

6. "Mercy and justice are the high prerogatives of Cæsar, and his name will be illustrious if he exercises them.

7. "But he who acts otherwise, who transcends the limits of power he has over those under his rule, and even goes so far as to put their lives in danger, offends the great Judge

and derogates from his own dignity in the eyes of men."

8. Upon this, an old woman who had approached the group, to better hear Issa, was pushed aside by one of the disguised men, who placed himself before her.

9. Then said Issa: "It is not good for a son to push away his mother, that he may occupy the place which belongs to her. Whoso doth not respect his mother—the most sacred being after his God—is unworthy of the name of son.

10. "Hearken to what I say to you: Respect woman; for in her we see the mother of the universe, and all the truth of divine creation is to come through her.

11. "She is the fount of everything good and beautiful, as she is also the germ of life and death. Upon her man depends in all his

existence, for she is his moral and natural support in his labors.

12. "In pain and suffering she brings you forth; in the sweat of her brow she watches over your growth, and until her death you cause her greatest anxieties. Bless her and adore her, for she is your only friend and support on earth.

13. "Respect her; defend her. In so doing you will gain for yourself her love; you will find favor before God, and for her sake many sins will be remitted to you.

14. "Love your wives and respect them, for they will be the mothers of to-morrow and later the grandmothers of a whole nation.

15. "Be submissive to the wife; her love ennobles man, softens his hardened heart,

tames the wild beast in him and changes it to a lamb.

16. "Wife and mother are the priceless treasures which God has given to you. They are the most beautiful ornaments of the universe, and from them will be born all who will inhabit the world.

17. "Even as the Lord of Hosts separated the light from the darkness, and the dry land from the waters, so does woman possess the divine gift of calling forth out of man's evil nature all the good that is in him.

18. "Therefore I say unto you, after God, to woman must belong your best thoughts, for she is the divine temple where you will most easily obtain perfect happiness.

19. "Draw from this temple your moral force. There you will forget your sorrows

and your failures, and recover the love necessary to aid your fellow-men.

20. "Suffer her not to be humiliated, for by humiliating her you humiliate yourselves, and lose the sentiment of love, without which nothing can exist here on earth.

21. "Protect your wife, that she may protect you—you and all your household. All that you do for your mothers, your wives, for a widow, or for any other woman in distress, you will do for your God."

XIII.

1. Thus Saint Issa taught the people of Israel for three years, in every city and every village, on the highways and in the fields, and all he said came to pass.

2. All this time the disguised spies of the

governor Pilate observed him closely, but heard nothing to sustain the accusations formerly made against Issa by the chiefs of the cities.

3. But Saint Issa's growing popularity did not allow Pilate to rest. He feared that Issa would be instrumental in bringing about a revolution culminating in his elevation to the sovereignty, and, therefore, ordered the spies to make charges against him.

4. Then soldiers were sent to arrest him, and they cast him into a subterranean dungeon, where he was subjected to all kinds of tortures, to compel him to accuse himself, so that he might be put to death.

5. The Saint, thinking only of the perfect bliss of his brethren, endured all those torments with resignation to the will of the Creator,

6. The servants of Pilate continued to torture him, and he was reduced to a state of extreme weakness; but God was with him and did not permit him to die at their hands.

7. When the principal priests and wise elders learned of the sufferings which their Saint endured, they went to Pilate, begging him to liberate Issa, so that he might attend the great festival which was near at hand.

8. But this the governor refused. Then they asked him that Issa should be brought before the elders' council, so that he might be condemned, or acquitted, before the festival, and to this Pilate agreed.

9. On the following day the governor assembled the principal chiefs, priests, elders and judges, for the purpose of judging Issa.

10. The Saint was brought from his prison. They made him sit before the governor,

between two robbers, who were to be judged at the same time with Issa, so as to show the people he was not the only one to be condemned.

11. And Pilate, addressing himself to Issa, said, "Is it true, Oh! Man; that thou incitest the populace against the authorities, with the purpose of thyself becoming King of Israel?"

12. Issa replied, "One does not become king by one's own purpose thereto. They have told you an untruth when you were informed that I was inciting the people to revolution. I have only preached of the King of Heaven, and it was Him whom I told the people to worship.

13. "For the sons of Israel have lost their original innocence and unless they return to worship the true God they will be sacrificed and their temple will fall in ruins.

14. "The worldly power upholds order in the land; I told them not to forget this. I said to them, 'Live in conformity with your situation and refrain from disturbing public order;' and, at the same time, I exhorted them to remember that disorder reigned in their own hearts and spirits

15. "Therefore, the King of Heaven has punished them, and has destroyed their nationality and taken from them their national kings, 'but,' I added, 'if you will be resigned to your fate, as a reward the Kingdom of Heaven will be yours."

16. At this moment the witnesses were introduced; one of whom deposed thus: "Thou hast said to the people that in comparison with the power of the king who would soon liberate the Israelites from the

yoke of the heathen, the worldly authorities amounted to nothing."

17. "Blessings upon thee!" said Issa. "For thou hast spoken the truth! The King of Heaven is greater and more powerful than the laws of man and His kingdom surpasses the kingdoms of this earth.

18. "And the time is not far off, when Israel, obedient to the will of God, will throw off its yoke of sin; for it has been written that a forerunner would appear to announce the deliverance of the people, and that he would re-unite them in one family."

19. Thereupon the governor said to the judges: "Have you heard this? The Israelite Issa acknowledges the crime of which he is accused. Judge him, then, according to your laws and pass upon him condemnation to death."

20. "We cannot condemn him," replied the priests and the ancients. "As thou hast heard, he spoke of the King of Heaven, and he has preached nothing which constitutes insubordination against the law."

21. Thereupon the governor called a witness who had been bribed by his master, Pilate, to betray Issa, and this man said to Issa: "Is it not true that thou hast represented thyself as a King of Israel, when thou didst say that He who reigns in Heaven sent thee to prepare His people?"

22. But Issa blessed the man and answered: "Thou wilt find mercy, for what thou hast said did not come out from thine own heart." Then, turning to the governor he said: "Why dost thou lower thy dignity and teach thy inferiors to tell falsehood, when,

without doing so, it is in thy power to condemn an innocent man?"

23. When Pilate heard his words, he became greatly enraged and ordered that Issa be condemned to death, and that the two robbers should be declared guiltless.

24. The judges, after consulting among themselves, said to Pilate: "We cannot consent to take this great sin upon us,—to condemn an innocent man and liberate malefactors. It would be against our laws.

25. "Act thyself, then, as thou seest fit." Thereupon the priests and elders walked out, and washed their hands in a sacred vessel, and said: "We are innocent of the blood of this righteous man."

XIV.

1. By order of the governor, the soldiers seized Issa and the two robbers, and led them to the place of execution, where they were nailed upon the crosses erected for them.

2. All day long the bodies of Issa and the two robbers hung upon the crosses, bleeding, guarded by the soldiers. The people stood all around and the relatives of the executed prayed and wept.

3. When the sun went down, Issa's tortures ended. He lost consciousness and his soul disengaged itself from the body, to reunite with God.

4. Thus ended the terrestrial existence of the reflection of the eternal Spirit under the

form of a man who had saved hardened sinners and comforted the afflicted.

5. Meanwhile, Pilate was afraid for what he had done, and ordered the body of the Saint to be given to his relatives, who put it in a tomb near to the place of execution. Great numbers of persons came to visit the tomb, and the air was filled with their wailings and lamentations.

6. Three days later, the governor sent his soldiers to remove Issa's body and bury it in some other place, for he feared a rebellion among the people.

7. The next day, when the people came to the tomb, they found it open and empty, the body of Issa being gone. Thereupon, the rumor spread that the Supreme Judge had sent His angels from Heaven, to remove the

mortal remains of the saint in whom part of the divine Spirit had lived on earth.

8. When Pilate learned of this rumor, he grew angry and prohibited, under penalty of death, the naming of Issa, or praying for him to the Lord.

9. But the people, nevertheless, continued to weep over Issa's death and to glorify their master; wherefore, many were carried into captivity, subjected to torture and put to death.

10. And the disciples of Saint Issa departed from the land of Israel and went in all directions, to the heathen, preaching that they should abandon their gross errors, think of the salvation of their souls and earn the perfect bliss which awaits human beings in the immaterial world, full of glory, where the

great Creator abides in all his immaculate and perfect majesty.

11. The heathen, their kings, and their warriors, listened to the preachers, abandoned their erroneous beliefs and forsook their priests and their idols, to celebrate the praises of the most wise Creator of the Universe, the King of Kings, whose heart is filled with infinite mercy

RESUMÉ.

In reading the account of the life of Issa (Jesus Christ), one is struck, on the one hand by the resemblance of certain principal passages to accounts in the Old and New Testaments; and, on the other, by the not less remarkable contradictions which occasionally occur between the Buddhistic version and Hebraic and Christian records.

To explain this, it is necessary to remember the epochs when the facts were consigned to writing.

We have been taught, from our childhood, that the Pentateuch was written by Moses himself, but the careful researches of modern

scholars have demonstrated conclusively, that at the time of Moses, and even much later, there existed in the country bathed by the Mediterranean, no other writing than the hieroglyphics in Egypt and the cuniform inscriptions, found nowadays in the excavations of Babylon. We know, however, that the alphabet and parchment were known in China and India long before Moses.

Let me cite a few proofs of this statement. We learn from the sacred books of "the religion of the wise" that the alphabet was invented in China in 2800 by Fou-si, who was the first emperor of China to embrace this religion, the ritual and exterior forms of which he himself arranged. Yao, the fourth of the Chinese emperors, who is said to have belonged to this faith, published moral and civil laws, and, in 2228, compiled a penal

code. The fifth emperor, Soune, proclaimed in the year of his accession to the throne that "the religion of the wise" should thenceforth be the recognized religion of the State, and, in 2282, compiled new penal laws. His laws, modified by the Emperor Vou-vange,—founder of the dynasty of the Tcheou in 1122,—are those in existence to-day, and known under the name of "Changements."

We also know that the doctrine of the Buddha Fô, whose true name was Sakya-Muni, was written upon parchment. Fô-ism began to spread in China about 260 years before Jesus Christ. In 206, an emperor of the Tsine dynasty, who was anxious to learn Buddhism, sent to India for a Buddhist by the name of Silifan, and the Emperor Ming-Ti, of the Hagne dynasty, sent, a year before Christ's birth, to India for the sacred books

written by the Buddha Sakya-Muni—the founder of the Buddhistic doctrine, who lived about 1200 before Christ.

The doctrine of the Buddha Gauthama or Gothama, who lived 600 years before Jesus Christ, was written in the Pali language upon parchment. At that epoch there existed already in India about 84,000 Buddhistic manuscripts, the compilation of which required a considerable number of years.

At the time when the Chinese and the Hindus possessed already a very rich written literature, the less fortunate or more ignorant peoples who had no alphabet, transmitted their histories from mouth to mouth, and from generation to generation. Owing to the unreliability of human memory, historical facts, embellished by Oriental imagination, soon degenerated into fabulous legends,

which, in the course of time, were collected, and by the unknown compilers entitled "The Five Books of Moses." As these legends ascribe to the Hebrew legislator extraordinary divine powers which enabled him to perform miracles in the presence of Pharaoh, the claim that he was an Israelite may as well have been legendary rather than historical.

The Hindu chroniclers, on the contrary, owing to their knowledge of an alphabet, were enabled to commit carefully to writing, not mere legends, but the recitals of recently occurred facts within their own knowledge, or the accounts brought to them by merchants who came from foreign countries.

It must be remembered, in this connection, that—in antiquity as in our own days—the whole public life of the Orient was concen-

trated in the bazaars. There the news of foreign events was brought by the merchant-caravans and sought by the dervishes, who found, in their recitals in the temples and public places, a means of subsistence. When the merchants returned home from a journey, they generally related fully during the first days after their arrival, all they had seen or heard abroad. Such have been the customs of the Orient, from time immemorial, and are to-day.

The commerce of India with Egypt and, later, with Europe, was carried on by way of Jerusalem, where, as far back as the time of King Solomon, the Hindu caravans brought precious metals and other materials for the construction of the temple. From Europe, merchandise was brought to Jerusalem by sea, and there unloaded in a port, which is

now occupied by the city of Jaffa. The chronicles in question were compiled before, during and after the time of Jesus Christ.

During his sojourn in India, in the quality of a simple student come to learn the Brahminical and Buddhistic laws, no special attention whatever was paid to his life. When, however, a little later, the first accounts of the events in Israel reached India, the chroniclers, after committing to writing that which they were told about the prophet, Issa,—*viz.*, that he had for his following a whole people, weary of the yoke of their masters, and that he was crucified by order of Pilate, remembered that this same Issa had only recently sojourned in their midst, and that, an Israelite by birth, he had come to study among them, after which he had returned to his country. They conceived a

lively interest for the man who had grown so rapidly under their eyes, and began to investigate his birth, his past and all the details concerning his existence.

The two manuscripts, from which the lama of the convent Himis read to me all that had a bearing upon Jesus, are compilations from divers copies written in the Thibetan language, translations of scrolls belonging to the library of Lhassa and brought, about two hundred years after Christ, from India, Nepaul and Maghada, to a convent on Mount Marbour, near the city of Lhassa, now the residence of the Dalai-Lama.

These scrolls were written in Pali, which certain lamas study even now, so as to be able to translate it into the Thibetan.

The chroniclers were Buddhists belonging to the sect of the Buddha Gothama.

The details concerning Jesus, given in the chronicles, are disconnected and mingled with accounts of other contemporaneous events to which they bear no relation.

The manuscripts relate to us, first of all,—according to the accounts given by merchants arriving from Judea in the same year when the death of Jesus occurred—that a just man by the name of Issa, an Israelite, in spite of his being acquitted twice by the judges as being a man of God, was nevertheless put to death by the order of the Pagan governor, Pilate, who feared that he might take advantage of his great popularity to re-establish the kingdom of Israel and expel from the country its conquerors.

Then follow rather incoherent communications regarding the preachings of Jesus among the Guebers and other heathens.

They seem to have been written during the first years following the death of Jesus, in whose career a lively and growing interest is shown.

One of these accounts, communicated by a merchant, refers to the origin of Jesus and his family; another tells of the expulsion of his partisans and the persecutions they had to suffer.

Only at the end of the second volume is found the first categorical affirmation of the chronicler. He says there that Issa was a man blessed by God and the best of all; that it was he in whom the great Brahma had elected to incarnate when, at a period fixed by destiny, his spirit was required to, for a time, separate from the Supreme Being.

After telling that Issa descended from poor Israelite parents, the chronicler makes

a little digression, for the purpose of explaining, according to ancient accounts, who were those sons of Israel.

I have arranged all the fragments concerning the life of Issa in chronological order and have taken pains to impress upon them the character of unity, in which they were absolutely lacking.

I leave it to the *savans*, the philosophers and the theologians to search into the causes for the contradictions which may be found between the "Life of Issa" which I lay before the public and the accounts of the Gospels. But I trust that everybody will agree with me in assuming that the version which I present to the public, one compiled three or four years after the death of Jesus, from the accounts of eye-witnesses and contemporaries, has much more probability of being in

conformity with truth than the accounts of the Gospels, the composition of which was effected at different epochs and at periods much posterior to the occurrence of the events.

Before speaking of the life of Jesus, I must say a few words on the history of Moses, who, according to the so-far most accredited legend, was an Israelite. In this respect the legend is contradicted by the Buddhists. We learn from the outset that Moses was an Egyptian prince, the son of a Pharaoh, and that he only was taught by learned Israelites. I believe that if this important point is carefully examined, it must be admitted that the Buddhist author may be right.

It is not my intent to argue against the Biblical legend concerning the origin of Moses, but I think everyone reading it must share my

conviction that Moses could not have been a simple Israelite. His education was rather that of a king's son, and it is difficult to believe that a child introduced by chance into the palace should have been made an equal with the son of the sovereign. The rigor with which the Egyptians treated their slaves by no means attests the mildness of their character. A foundling certainly would not have been made the companion of the sons of a Pharaoh, but would be placed among his servants. Add to this the caste spirit so strictly observed in ancient Egypt, a most salient point, which is certainly calculated to raise doubts as to the truth of the Scriptural story.

And it is difficult to suppose that Moses had not received a complete education. How otherwise could his great legislative

work, his broad views, his high administrative qualities be satisfactorily explained?

And now comes another question: Why should he, a prince, have attached himself to the Israelites? The answer seems to me very simple. It is known that in ancient, as well as in modern times, discussions were often raised as to which of two brothers should succeed to the father's throne. Why not admit this hypothesis, *viz.*, that Mossa, or Moses, having an elder brother whose existence forbade him to think of occupying the throne of Egypt, contemplated founding a distinct kingdom.

It might very well be that, in view of this end, he tried to attach himself to the Israelites, whose firmness of faith as well as physical strength he had occasion to admire. We know, indeed, that the Israelites of Egypt

had no resemblance whatever to their descendants as regards physical constitution. The granite blocks which were handled by them in building the palaces and pyramids are still in place to testify to this fact. In the same way I explain to myself the history of the miracles which he is said to have performed before Pharaoh.

Although there are no definite arguments for denying the miracles which Moses might have performed in the name of God before Pharaoh, I think it is not difficult to realize that the Buddhistic statement sounds more probable than the Scriptural gloss. The pestilence, the small-pox or the cholera must, indeed, have caused enormous ravages among the dense population of Egypt, at an epoch when there existed yet but very rudimentary ideas about hygiene and where,

consequently, such diseases must have rapidly assumed frightful virulence.

In view of Pharaoh's fright at the disasters which befell Egypt, Moses' keen wit might well have suggested to him to explain the strange and terrifying occurrences, to his father, by the intervention of the God of Israel in behalf of his chosen people.

Moses was here afforded an excellent opportunity to deliver the Israelites from their slavery and have them pass under his own domination.

In obedience to Pharaoh's will—according to the Buddhistic version—Moses led the Israelites outside the walls of the city; but, instead of building a new city within reach of the capital, as he was ordered, he left with them the Egyptian territory. Pharaoh's indignation on learning of this infringement of

his commands by Moses, can easily be imagined. And so he gave the order to his soldiers to pursue the fugitives. The geographical disposition of the region suggests at once that Moses during his flight must have moved by the side of the mountains and entered Arabia by the way over the Isthmus which is now cut by the Suez Canal.

Pharaoh, on the contrary, pursued, with his troops, a straight line to the Red Sea; then, in order to overtake the Israelites, who had already gained the opposite shore, he sought to take advantage of the ebb of the sea in the Gulf, which is formed by the coast and the Isthmus, and caused his soldiers to wade through the ford. But the length of the passage proved much greater than he had expected; so that the flood-tide set in

when the Egyptian host was half way across, and, of the army thus overwhelmed by the returning waves, none escaped death.

This fact, so simple in itself, has in the course of the centuries been transformed by the Israelites into a religious legend, they seeing in it a divine intervention in their behalf and a punishment which their God inflicted on their persecutors. There is, moreover, reason to believe that Moses himself saw the occurrence in this light. This, however, is a thesis which I shall try to develop in a forthcoming work.

The Buddhistic chronicle then describes the grandeur and the downfall of the kingdom of Israel, and its conquest by the foreign nations who reduced the inhabitants to slavery.

The calamities which befell the Israelites,

and the afflictions that thenceforth embittered their days were, according to the chronicler, more than sufficient reasons that God, pitying his people and desirous of coming to their aid, should descend on earth in the person of a prophet, in order to lead them back to the path of righteousness.

Thus the state of things in that epoch justified the belief that the coming of Jesus was signalized, imminent, necessary.

This explains why the Buddhistic traditions could maintain that the eternal Spirit separated from the eternal Being and incarnated in the child of a pious and once illustrious family.

Doubtless the Buddhists, in common with the Evangelists, meant to convey by this that the child belonged to the royal house of David; but the text in the Gospels, accord-

ing to which "the child was born from the Holy Spirit," admits of two interpretations, while according to Buddha's doctrine, which is more in conformity with the laws of nature, the spirit has but incarnated in a child already born, whom God blessed and chose for the accomplishment of His mission on earth.

The birth of Jesus is followed by a long gap in the traditions of the Evangelists, who either from ignorance or neglect, fail to tell us anything definite about his childhood, youth or education. They commence the history of Jesus with his first sermon, *i. e.*, at the epoch, when thirty years of age, he returns to his country.

All the Evangelists tell us concerning the infancy of Jesus is marked by the lack of precision: "And the child grew, and waxed

strong in spirit, filled with wisdom ; and the grace of God was upon him," says one of the sacred authors (Luke 2, 40), and another : "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." (Luke 1, 80.)

As the Evangelists compiled their writings a long time after the death of Jesus, it is presumable that they committed to writing only those accounts of the principal events in the life of Jesus which happened to come to their knowledge.

The Buddhists, on the contrary, who compiled their chronicles soon after the Passion occurred, and were able to collect the surest information about everything that interested them, give us a complete and very detailed description of the life of Jesus.

In those unhappy times, when the struggle

for existence seems to have destroyed all thought of God, the people of Israel suffered the double oppression of the ambitious Herod and the despotic and avaricious Romans. Then, as now, the Hebrews put all their hopes in Providence, whom they expected, would send them an inspired man, who should deliver them from all their physical and moral afflictions. The time passed, however, and no one took the initiative in a revolt against the tyranny of the rulers.

In that era of hope and despair, the people of Israel completely forgot that there lived among them a poor Israelite who was a direct descendant from their King David. This poor man married a young girl who gave birth to a miraculous child.

The Hebrews, true to their traditions of devotion and respect for the race of their

kings, upon learning of this event went in great numbers to congratulate the happy father and see the child. It is evident that Herod was informed of this occurrence. He feared that this infant, once grown to manhood, might avail himself of his prospective popularity to re-conquer the throne of his ancestors. He sent out his men to seize the child, which the Israelites endeavored to hide from the wrath of the king, who then ordered the abominable massacre of the children, hoping that Jesus would perish in this vast human hecatomb. But Joseph's family had warning of the impending danger, and took refuge in Egypt.

A short time afterward, they returned to their native country. The child had grown during those journeyings, in which his life was more than once exposed to danger.

Formerly, as now, the Oriental Israelites commenced the instruction of their children at the age of five or six years. Compelled to constantly hide him from the murderous King Herod, the parents of Jesus could not allow their son to go out, and he, no doubt, spent all his time in studying the sacred Scriptures, so that his knowledge was sufficiently beyond what would naturally have been expected of a boy of his age to greatly astonish the elders of Israel. He had in his thirteenth year attained an age when, according to Jewish law, the boy becomes an adult, has the right to marry, and incurs obligations for the discharge of the religious duties of a man.

There exists still, in our times, among the Israelites, an ancient religious custom that fixes the majority of a youth at the accom-

plished thirteenth year. From this epoch the youth becomes a member of the congregation and enjoys all the rights of an adult. Hence, his marriage at this age is regarded as having legal force, and is even required in the tropical countries. In Europe, however, owing to the influence of local laws and to nature, which does not contribute here so powerfully as in warm climates to the physical development, this custom is no more in force and has lost all its former importance.

The royal lineage of Jesus, his rare intelligence and his learning, caused him to be looked upon as an excellent match, and the wealthiest and most respected Hebrews would fain have had him for a son-in-law, just as even nowadays the Israelites are very desirous of the honor of marrying their daughters to the sons of Rabbis or scholars.

But the meditative youth, whose mind was far above anything corporeal, and possessed by the thirst for knowledge, stealthily left his home and joined the caravans going to India.

It stands to reason that Jesus Christ should have thought, primarily, of going to India, first, because at that epoch Egypt formed part of the Roman possessions; secondly, and principally, because a very active commercial exchange with India had made common report in Judea of the majestic character and unsurpassed richness of the arts and sciences in this marvellous country, to which even now the aspirations of all civilized peoples are directed.

Here the Evangelists once more lose the thread of the terrestrial life of Jesus. Luke says he "was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel" (Luke 1, 80), which

clearly demonstrates that nobody knew where the holy youth was until his sudden re-appearance sixteen years later.

Arrived in India, this land of marvels, Jesus began to frequent the temples of the Djainites.

There exists until to-day, on the peninsula of Hindustan, a sectarian cult under the name of Djainism. It forms a kind of connecting link between Buddhism and Brahminism, and preaches the destruction of all other beliefs, which, it declares, are corroded by falsehood. It dates from the seventh century before Jesus Christ and its name is derived from the word "djain" (conqueror), which was assumed by its founders as expressive of its destined triumph over its rivals.

In sympathetic admiration for the spirit of the young man, the Djainites asked him to

stay with them; but Jesus left them to settle in Djagguernat, where he devoted himself to the study of treatises on religion, philosophy, etc. Djagguernat is one of the chief sacred cities of Brahmins, and, at the time of Christ, was of great religious importance. According to tradition, the ashes of the illustrious Brahmin, Krishna, who lived in 1580 B. C., are preserved there, in the hollow of a tree, near a magnificent temple, to which thousands make pilgrimage every year. Krishna collected and put in order the Vedas, which he divided into four books—Richt, Jagour, Saman and Artafan;—in commemoration of which great work he received the name of Vyasa (he who collected and divided the Vedas), and he also compiled the Vedanta and eighteen Puranas, which contain 400,000 stanzas.

In Djagguernat is also found a very precious library of Sanscrit books and religious manuscripts.

Jesus spent there six years in studying the language of the country and the Sanscrit, which enabled him to absorb the religious doctrines, philosophy, medicine and mathematics. He found much to blame in Brahminical laws and usages, and publicly joined issue with the Brahmins, who in vain endeavored to convince him of the sacred character of their established customs. Jesus, among other things, deemed it extremely unjust that the laborer should be oppressed and despised, and that he should not only be robbed of hope of future happiness, but also be denied the right to hear the religious services. He, therefore, began preaching to the Sudras, the lowest caste of slaves, telling

them that, according to their own laws, God is the Father of all men; that all which exists, exists only through Him; that, before Him, all men are equal, and that the Brahmins had obscured the great principle of monotheism by misinterpreting Brahma's own words, and laying excessive stress upon observance of the exterior ceremonials of the cult.

Here are the words in which, according to the doctrine of the Brahmins, God Himself speaks to the angels: "I have been from eternity, and shall continue to be eternally. I am the first cause of everything that exists in the East and in the West, in the North and in the South, above and below, in heaven and in hell. I am older than all things. I am the Spirit and the Creation of the universe and also its Creator. I am all-powerful; I am the God of the Gods, the King of the

Kings; I am Para-Brahma, the great soul of the universe."

After the world appeared by the will of Para-Brahma, God created human beings, whom he divided into four classes, according to their colors: white (Brahmins), red (Kshatriyas), yellow (Vaisyas), and black (Sudras). Brahma drew the first from his own mouth, and gave them for their *appanage* the government of the world, the care of teaching men the laws, of curing and judging them. Therefore do the Brahmins occupy only the offices of priests and preachers, are expounders of the Vedas, and must practice celibacy.

The second caste of Kshatriyas issued from the hand of Brahma. He made of them warriors, entrusting them with the care of defending society. All the kings, princes,

captains, governors and military men belong to this caste, which lives on the best terms with the Brahmins, since they cannot subsist without each other, and the peace of the country depends on the alliance of the lights and the sword, of Brahma's temple and the royal throne.

The Vaisyas, who constitute the third caste, issued from Brahma's belly. They are destined to cultivate the ground, raise cattle, carry on commerce and practice all kinds of trades in order to feed the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas. Only on holidays are they authorized to enter the temple and listen to the recital of the Vedas; at all other times they must attend to their business.

The lowest caste, that of the black ones, or Sudras, issued from the feet of Brahma to be the humble servants and slaves of the

three preceding castes. They are interdicted from attending the reading of the Vedas at any time; their touch contaminates a Brahmin, Kshatriya, or even a Vaisya who comes in contact with them. They are wretched creatures, deprived of all human rights; they cannot even look at the members of the other castes, nor defend themselves, nor, when sick, receive the attendance of a physician. Death alone can deliver the Sudra from a life of servitude; and even then, freedom can only be attained under the condition that, during his whole life, he shall have served diligently and without complaint some member of the privileged classes. Then only it is promised that the soul of the Sudra shall, after death, be raised to a superior caste.

If a Sudra has been lacking in obedience to a member of the privileged classes, or has

in any way brought their disfavor upon himself, he sinks to the rank of a pariah, who is banished from all cities and villages and is the object of general contempt, as an abject being who can only perform the lowest kind of work.

The same punishment may also fall upon members of another caste; these, however, may, through repentance, fasting and other trials, re-habilitate themselves in their former caste; while the unfortunate Sudra, once expelled from his, has lost it forever.

From what has been said above, it is easy to explain why the Vaisyas and Sudras were animated with adoration for Jesus, who, in spite of the threats of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas, never forsook those poor people.

In his sermons Jesus not only censured the system by which man was robbed of his

right to be considered as a human being, while an ape or a piece of marble or metal was paid divine worship, but he attacked the very life of Brahminism, its system of gods, its doctrine and its "trimurti" (trinity), the angular stone of this religion.

Para-Brahma is represented with three faces on a single head. This is the "trimurti" (trinity), composed of Brahma (creator), Vishnu (conservator), and Siva (destroyer).

Here is the origin of the trimurti:—

In the beginning, Para-Brahma created the waters and threw into them the seed of procreation, which transformed itself into a brilliant egg, wherein Brahma's image was reflected. Millions of years had passed when Brahma split the egg in two halves, of which the upper one became the heaven, the lower

one, the earth. Then Brahma descended to the earth under the shape of a child, established himself upon a lotus flower, absorbed himself in his own contemplation and put to himself the question: "Who will attend to the conservation of what I have created?" "I," came the answer from his mouth under the appearance of a flame. And Brahma gave to this word the name, "Vishnu," that is to say, "he who preserves." Then Brahma divided his being into two halves, the one male, the other female, the active and the passive principles, the union of which produced Siva, "the destroyer."

These are the attributes of the trimurti; Brahma, creative principle; Vishnu, preservative wisdom; Siva, destructive wrath of justice. Brahma is the substance from which everything was made; Vishnu, space wherein

everything lives; and Siva, time that annihilates all things.

Brahma is the face which vivifies all; Vishnu, the water which sustains the forces of the creatures; Siva, the fire which breaks the bond that unites all objects. Brahma is the past; Vishnu, the present; Siva, the future. Each part of the trimurti possesses, moreover, a wife. The wife of Brahma is Sarasvati, goddess of wisdom; that of Vishnu, Lakshmi, goddess of virtue, and Siva's spouse is Kali, goddess of death, the universal destroyer.

Of this last union were born, Ganesa, the elephant-headed god of wisdom, and Indra, the god of the firmament, both chiefs of inferior divinities, the number of which, if all the objects of adoration of the Hindus

be included, amounts to three hundred millions.

Vishnu has descended eight times upon the earth, incarnating in a fish in order to save the Vedas from the deluge, in a tortoise, a dwarf, a wild boar, a lion, in Rama, a king's son, in Krishna and in Buddha. He will come a ninth time under the form of a rider mounted on a white horse in order to destroy death and sin.

Jesus denied the existence of all these hierarchic absurdities of gods, which darken the great principle of monotheism.

When the Brahmins saw that Jesus, who, instead of becoming one of their party, as they had hoped, turned out to be their adversary, and that the people began to embrace his doctrine, they resolved to kill him; but his servants, who were greatly attached

to him, forewarned him of the threatening danger, and he took refuge in the mountains of Nepaul. At this epoch, Buddhism had taken deep root in this country. It was a kind of schism, remarkable by its moral principles and ideas on the nature of the divinity—ideas which brought men closer to nature and to one another.

Sakya-Muni, the founder of this sect, was born fifteen hundred years before Jesus Christ, at Kapila, the capital of his father's kingdom, near Nepaul, in the Himalayas. He belonged to the race of the Gotamides, and to the ancient family of the Sakyas. From his infancy he evinced a lively interest in religion, and, contrary to his father's wishes, leaving his palace with all its luxury, began at once to preach against the Brahmins, for the purification of their doc-

trines. He died at Kouçinagara, surrounded by many faithful disciples. His body was burned, and his ashes, divided into several parts, were distributed between the cities, which, on account of his new doctrine, had renounced Brahminism.

According to the Buddhistic doctrine, the Creator reposes normally in a state of perfect inaction, which is disturbed by nothing and which he only leaves at certain destiny-determined epochs, in order to create terrestrial buddhas. To this end the Spirit disengages itself from the sovereign Creator, incarnates in a buddha and stays for some time on the earth, where he creates Bodhisattvas (masters),* whose mission it is to preach the

* *Sanscrit* :—" He whose essence (sattva) has become intelligence (bhodi)," those who need but one more incarnation to become perfect buddhas, *i. e.*, to be entitled to Nirvâna.

divine word and to found new churches of believers to whom they will give laws, and for whom they will institute a new religious order according to the traditions of Buddhism.

A terrestrial buddha is, in a certain way, a reflection of the sovereign creative Buddha, with whom he unites after the termination of his terrestrial existence. In like manner do the Bodhisattvas, as a reward for their labors and the privations they undergo, receive eternal bliss and enjoy a rest which nothing can disturb.

Jesus sojourned six years among the Buddhists, where he found the principle of monotheism still pure. Arrived at the age of twenty-six years, he remembered his fatherland, which was then oppressed by a foreign yoke. On his way homeward, he preached

against idol-worship, human sacrifice, and other errors of faith, admonishing the people to recognize and adore God, the Father of all beings, to whom all are alike dear, the master as well as the slave; for they all are his children, to whom he has given this beautiful universe for a common heritage. The sermons of Jesus often made a profound impression upon the peoples among whom he came, and he was exposed to all sorts of dangers provoked by the clergy, but was saved by the very idolators who, only the preceding day, had offered their children as sacrifices to their idols.

While passing through Persia, Jesus almost caused a revolution among the adorers of Zoroaster's doctrine. Nevertheless, the priests refrained from killing him, out of fear of the peoples' vengeance. They

resorted to artifice, and led him out of town at night, with the hope that he might be devoured by wild beasts. Jesus escaped this peril and arrived safe and sound in the country of Israel.

It must be remarked here that the Orientals, amidst their sometimes so picturesque misery, and in the ocean of depravation in which they slumber, always have, under the influence of their priests and teachers, a pronounced inclination for learning and understand easily good common sense explications. It happened to me more than once that, by using simple words of truth, I appealed to the conscience of a thief or some otherwise intractable person. These people, moved by a sentiment of innate honesty,—which the clergy for personal reasons of their own, tried by

all means to stifle—soon became again very honest and had only contempt for those who had abused their confidence.

By the virtue of a mere word of truth, the whole of India, with its 300,000,000 of idols, could be made a vast Christian country; but . . . . this beautiful project would, no doubt, be antagonized by certain Christians who, similar to those priests of whom I have spoken before, speculate upon the ignorance of the people to make themselves rich.

According to St. Luke, Jesus was about thirty years of age when he began preaching to the Israelites. According to the Buddhistic chroniclers, Jesus's teachings in Judea began in his twenty-ninth year. All his sermons which are not mentioned by the Evangelists, but have been preserved by the Buddhists, are remarkable

for their character of divine grandeur. The fame of the new prophet spread rapidly in the country, and Jerusalem awaited with impatience his arrival. When he came near the holy city, its inhabitants went out to meet him, and led him in triumph to the temple; all of which is in agreement with Christian tradition. The chiefs and elders who heard him were filled with admiration for his sermons, and were happy to see the beneficent impression which his words exercised upon the populace. All these remarkble sermons of Jesus are full of sublime sentiments.

Pilate, the governor of the country, however, did not look upon the matter in the same light. Eager agents notified him that Jesus announced the near coming of a new kingdom, the re-establishment of the throne

of Israel, and that he suffered himself to be called the Son of God, sent to bring back courage in Israel, for he, the King of Judea, would soon ascend the throne of his ancestors.

I do not purpose attributing to Jesus the *rôle* of a revolutionary, but it seems to me very probable that Jesus wrought up the people with a view to re-establish the throne to which he had a just claim. Divinely inspired, and, at the same time, convinced of the legitimacy of his pretentions, Jesus preached the spiritual union of the people in order that a political union might result.

Pilate, who felt alarmed over these rumors, called together the priests and the elders of the people and ordered them to interdict Jesus from preaching in public, and even to condemn him in the temple under the charge of apostasy. This was the best means for

Pilate to rid himself of a dangerous man, whose royal origin he knew and whose popularity was constantly increasing.

It must be said in this connection that the Israelites, far from persecuting Jesus, recognized in him the descendant of the illustrious dynasty of David, and made him the object of their secret hopes, a fact which is evident from the very Gospels which tell that Jesus preached freely in the temple, in the presence of the elders, who could have interdicted him not only the entrance to the temple, but also his preachings.

Upon the order of Pilate the Sanhedrim met and cited Jesus to appear before its tribunal. As the result of the inquiry, the members of the Sanhedrim informed Pilate that his suspicions were without any foundation whatever; that Jesus preached a reli-

gious, and not a political, propaganda; that he was expounding the Divine word, and that he claimed to have come not to overthrow, but to re-establish the laws of Moses. The Buddhistic record does but confirm this sympathy, which unquestionably existed between the young preacher, Jesus, and the elders of the people of Israel; hence their answer: "We do not judge a just one."

Pilate felt not at all assured, and continued seeking an occasion to hale Jesus before a new tribunal, as regular as the former. To this end he caused him to be followed by spies, and finally ordered his arrest.

If we may believe the Evangelists, it was the Pharisees who sought the life of Jesus, while the Buddhistic record most positively declares that Pilate alone can be held responsible for his execution. This version is

evidently much more probable than the account of the Evangelists. The conquerors of Judea could not long tolerate the presence of a man who announced to the people a speedy deliverance from their yoke. The popularity of Jesus having commenced to disturb Pilate's mind, it is to be supposed that he sent after the young preacher spies, with the order to take note of all his words and acts. Moreover, the servants of the Roman governor, as true "agents provocateurs," endeavored by means of artful questions put to Jesus, to draw from him some imprudent words under color of which Pilate might proceed against him. If the preachings of Jesus had been offensive to the Hebrew priests and scribes, all they needed to do was simply to command the people not to hear and follow him, and to forbid him en-

trance into the temple. But the Evangelists tell us that Jesus enjoyed great popularity among the Israelites and full liberty in the temples, where Pharisees and scribes discussed with him.

In order to find a valid excuse for condemning him, Pilate had him tortured so as to extort from him a confession of high treason.

But, contrary to the rule that the innocent, overcome by their pain, will confess anything to escape the unendurable agonies inflicted upon them, Jesus made no admission of guilt. Pilate, seeing that the usual tortures were powerless to accomplish the desired result, commanded the executioners to proceed to the last extreme of their diabolic cruelties, meaning to compass the death of Jesus by the complete exhaustion of his

forces. Jesus, however, fortifying his endurance by the power of his will and zeal for his righteous cause—which was also that of his people and of God—was unconquerable by all the refinements of cruelty inflicted upon him by his executioners.

The infliction of "the question" upon Jesus evoked much feeling among the elders, and they resolved to interfere in his behalf; formally demanding of Pilate that he should be liberated before the Passover.

When their request was denied by Pilate they resolved to petition that Jesus should be brought to trial before the Sanhedrim, by whom they did not doubt his acquittal—which was ardently desired by the people—would be ordained.

In the eyes of the priests, Jesus was a saint, belonging to the family of David; and

his unjust detention, or—what was still more to be dreaded—his condemnation, would have saddened the celebration of the great national festival of the Israelites.

They therefore prayed Pilate that the trial of Jesus should take place before the Passover, and to this he acceded. But he ordered that two thieves should be tried at the same time with Jesus, thinking to, in this way, minimize in the eyes of the people, the importance of the fact that the life of an innocent man was being put in jeopardy before the tribunal; and, by not allowing Jesus to be condemned alone, blind the populace to the unjust pre-arrangement of his condemnation.

The accusation against Jesus was founded upon the depositions of the bribed witnesses.

During the trial, Pilate availed himself of

perversions of Jesus' words concerning the heavenly kingdom, to sustain the charges made against him. He counted, it seems, upon the effect produced by the answers of Jesus, as well as upon his own authority, to influence the members of the tribunal against examining too minutely the details of the case, and to procure from them the sentence of death for which he intimated his desire.

Upon hearing the perfectly natural answer of the judges, that the meaning of the words of Jesus was diametrically opposed to the accusation, and that there was nothing in them to warrant his condemnation, Pilate employed his final resource for prejudicing the trial, *viz.*, the deposition of a purchased traitorous informer. This miserable wretch —who was, no doubt, Judas—accused Jesus

formally, of having incited the people to rebellion.

Then followed a scene of unsurpassed sublimity. When Judas gave his testimony, Jesus, turning toward him, and giving him his blessing, says: "Thou wilt find mercy, for what thou hast said did not come out from thine own heart!" Then, addressing himself to the governor: "Why dost thou lower thy dignity, and teach thy inferiors to tell falsehood, when without doing so it is in thy power to condemn an innocent man?"

Words touching as sublime! Jesus Christ here manifests all the grandeur of his soul by pardoning his betrayer, and he reproaches Pilate with having resorted to such means, unworthy of his dignity, to attain his end.

This keen reproach enraged the governor,

and caused him to completely forget his position, and the prudent policy with which he had meant to evade personal responsibility for the crime he contemplated. He now imperiously demanded the conviction of Jesus, and, as though he intended to make a display of his power, to overawe the judges, ordered the acquittal of the two thieves.

The judges, seeing the injustice of Pilate's demand, that they should acquit the malefactors and condemn the innocent Jesus, refused to commit this double crime against their consciences and their laws. But as they could not cope with one who possessed the authority of final judgment, and saw that he was firmly decided to rid himself, by whatever means, of a man who had fallen under the suspicions of the Roman authorities, they left him to himself pronounce the ver-

dict for which he was so anxious. In order, however, that the people might not suspect them of sharing the responsibility for such unjust judgment, which would not readily have been forgiven, they, in leaving the court, performed the ceremony of washing their hands, symbolizing the affirmation that they were clean of the blood of the innocent Jesus, the beloved of the people.

About ten years ago, I read in a German journal, the *Fremdenblatt*, an article on Judas, wherein the author endeavored to demonstrate that the informer had been the best friend of Jesus. According to him, it was out of love for his master that Judas betrayed him, for he put blind faith in the words of the Saviour, who said that his kingdom would arrive after his execution. But after seeing him on the cross, and having waited in vain

for the resurrection of Jesus, which he expected to immediately take place, Judas, not able to bear the pain by which his heart was torn, committed suicide by hanging himself. It would be profitless to dwell upon this ingenious product of a fertile imagination.

To take up again the accounts of the Gospels and the Buddhistic chronicle, it is very possible that the bribed informer was really Judas, although the Buddhistic version is silent on this point. As to the pangs of conscience which are said to have impelled the informer to suicide, I must say that I give no credence to them. A man capable of committing so vile and cowardly an action as that of making an infamously false accusation against his friend, and this, not out of a spirit of jealousy, or for revenge, but to gain a handful of shekels! such a man is, from the

psychic point of view, of very little worth. He ignores honesty and conscience, and pangs of remorse are unknown to him.

It is presumable that the governor treated him as is sometimes done in our days, when it is deemed desirable to effectually conceal state secrets known to men of his kind and presumably unsafe in their keeping. Judas probably was simply hanged, by Pilate's order, to prevent the possibility of his some day revealing that the plot of which Jesus was a victim had been inspired by the authorities.

On the day of the execution, a numerous detachment of Roman soldiers was placed around the cross to guard against any attempt by the populace for the delivery of him who was the object of their veneration.

In this occurrence Pilate gave proof of his extraordinary firmness and resolution.

But though, owing to the precautions taken by the governor, the anticipated revolt did not occur, he could not prevent the people, after the execution, mourning the ruin of their hopes, which were destroyed, together with the last scion of the race of David. All the people went to worship at Jesus' grave. Although we have no precise information concerning the occurrences of the first few days following the Passion, we could, by some probable conjectures, re-construct the scenes which must have taken place.

It stands to reason that the Roman Cæsar's clever lieutenant, when he saw that Christ's grave became the centre of universal lamentations and the subject of national grief, and

feared that the memory of the righteous victim might excite the discontent of the people and raise the whole country against the foreigners' rule, should have employed any effective means for the removal of this rallying-point, the mortal remains of Jesus. Pilate began by having the body buried. For three days the soldiers who were stationed on guard at the grave, were exposed to all kinds of insults and injuries on the part of the people who, defying the danger, came in multitudes to mourn the great martyr. Then Pilate ordered his soldiers to remove the body at night, and to bury it clandestinely in some other place, leaving the first grave open and the guard withdrawn from it, so that the people could see that Jesus had disappeared. But Pilate missed his end; for when, on the following

morning, the Hebrews did not find the corpse of their master in the sepulchre, the superstitious and miracle-accepting among them thought that he had been resurrected.

How did this legend take root? We cannot say. Possibly it existed for a long time in a latent state and, at the beginning, spread only among the common people; perhaps the ecclesiastic authorities of the Hebrews looked with indulgence upon this innocent belief, which gave to the oppressed a shadow of revenge on their oppressors. However it be, the day when the legend of the resurrection finally became known to all, there was no one to be found strong enough to demonstrate the impossibility of such an occurrence.

Concerning this resurrection, it must be remarked that, according to the Buddhists,

the soul of the just Issa was united with the eternal Being, while the Evangelists insist upon the ascension of the body. It seems to me, however, that the Evangelists and the Apostles have done very well to give the description of the resurrection which they have agreed upon, for if they had not done so, *i. e.*, if the miracle had been given a less material character, their preaching would not have had, in the eyes of the nations to whom it was presented, that divine authority, that avowedly supernatural character, which has clothed Christianity, until our time, as the only religion capable of elevating the human race to a state of sublime enthusiasm, suppressing its savage instincts, and bringing it nearer to the grand and simple nature which God has bestowed, they say, upon that feeble dwarf called man.

EXPLANATORY NOTES.

Chapter III.

§§ 3, 4, 5, 7.

The histories of all peoples show that when a nation has reached the apogee of its military glory and its wealth, it begins at once to sink more or less rapidly on the declivity of moral degeneration and decay. The Israelites having, among the first, experienced this law of the evolution of nations, the neighboring peoples profited by the decadence of the then effeminate and debauched descendants of Jacob, to despoil them.

§ 8.

The country of Romeles, *i. e.*, the fatherland of Romulus; in our days, Rome.

§§ 11, 12.

It must be admitted that the Israelites, in spite of their incontestable wit and intelligence, seem to have only had regard for the present. Like all other Oriental peoples, they only in their

misfortunes remembered the faults of their past, which they each time had to expiate by centuries of slavery.

Chapter IV.

§ 6.

As it is easy to divine, this verse refers to Joseph, who was a lineal descendant from King David. Side by side with this somewhat vague indication may be placed the following passages from the Gospels :

—" The angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife " . . . (Matt. i, 20.)

—" And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the son of David " (Matt. xxi, 9).

—" To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David ;" . . (Luke i, 27.)

—" And the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David ;" . . . (Luke i, 32.)

—" And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the

son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli, . . . which was the son of Nathan, which was the son of David" (Luke iii, 23–31).

§ 7.

Both the Old and the New Testaments teach that God promised David the rehabilitation of his throne and the elevation to it of one of his descendants.

§§ 8, 9.

—"And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him."

—"And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions."

—"And all that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers."

—"And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?"

—"And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke ii, 40, 46, 47, 49, 52).

Chapter V

§ 1.

"Sind," a Sanscrit word, which has been modified by the Persians into Ind. "Arya," the name given in antiquity to the inhabitants of India; signified first "man who cultivates the ground" or "cultivator." Anciently it had a purely ethnographical signification; this appellation assumed later on a religious sense, notably that of "man who believes."

§ 2.

Luke says (i, 80): "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the deserts till the day of his shewing unto Israel." The Evangelists say that Jesus was in the desert, the Buddhists explain this version of the Gospels by indicating where Jesus was during his absence from Judea. According to them he crossed the Sind, a name which, properly spoken, signifies "the river" (Indus). In connection with this word it is not amiss to note that many Sanscrit words in passing into the Persian language underwent the same transformation by changing the "s" into "h;" per example:

Sapta (in Sanscrit), signifying seven—*hafta* (in Persian) ;

Sam (Sanscrit), signifying equal—*ham* (Persian) ;

Mas (Sanscrit), meaning mouth—*mah* (Persian) ; *Sur* (Sanscrit), meaning sun—*hur* (Persian) ; *Das* (Sanscrit), meaning ten—*Dah* (Persian) ; *Loco citato*—and those who believed in the god Djain.

There exists, even yet, on the peninsula of Hindustan, a cult under the name of Djainism, which forms, as it were, a link of union between Buddhism and Brahminism, and its devotees teach the destruction of all other beliefs, which they declare contaminated with falsehood. It dates as far back as the seventh century, B. C. Its name is derived from Djain (conqueror), which it assumed as the symbol of its triumph over its rivals.

§ 4.

Each of the eighteen Puranas is divided into five parts, which, besides the canonical laws, the rites and the commentaries upon the creation, destruction and resurrection of the universe, deal with theogony, medicine, and even the trades and professions.

Chapter VI.

§ 12.

Owing to the intervention of the British, the human sacrifices, which were principally offered to Kali, the goddess of death, have now entirely ceased. The goddess Kali is represented erect, with one foot upon the dead body of a man, whose head she holds in one of her innumerable hands, while with the other hand she brandishes a bloody dagger. Her eyes and mouth, which are wide open, express passion and cruelty.

Chapter VIII.

§§ 3, 4.

Zoroaster lived 550 years before Jesus. He founded the doctrine of the struggle between light and darkness, a doctrine which is fully expounded in the Zend-Avesta (Word of God), which is written in the Zend language, and, according to tradition, was given to him by an angel from Paradise.

According to Zoroaster we must worship Mithra (the sun), from whom descend Ormuzd, the god of good, and Ahriman, the god of evil. The world will end when Ormuzd has triumphed

over his rival, Ahriman, who will then return to his original source, Mithra.

Chapter X.

§ 16.

According to the Evangelists, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, which the Buddhistic version confirms, for only from Bethlehem, situated at a distance of about seven kilometres from Jerusalem, could the walls of this latter city be seen.

Chapter XI.

§ 15.

The doctrine the Redemptor is, almost in its entirety, contained in the Gospels. As to the transformation of men into children, it is especially known from the conversation that took place between Jesus and Nicodemus.

Chapter XII.

§ 1.

—"Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" (Matt. xxii, 17.)

§ 3.

—"Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and

unto God the things that are God's. (Matt. xxii, 21 ; *et. al.*)

Chapter XIV

§ 3.

According to the Buddhistic belief, the terrestrial buddhas after death, lose consciousness of their independent existence and unite with the eternal Spirit.

§§ 10, 11.

Here, no doubt, reference is made to the activity of the Apostles among the neighboring peoples ; an activity which could not have passed unnoticed at that epoch, because of the great results which followed the preaching of the new religious doctrine of love among nations whose religions were based upon the cruelty of their gods.

. . . . . .

Without permitting myself indulgence in great dissertations, or too minute analysis upon each verse, I have thought it useful to accompany my work with these few little explanatory notes, leaving it to the reader to take like trouble with the rest.

FINIS.